

## AUSCHWITZ: THE FIRST GASSING

**T**he first gassing of human beings at Auschwitz, a pivotal nadir in human history, is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts.

In *Auschwitz: The First Gassing*, renowned Italian Holocaust historian Carlo Mattogno exhibits the sources about this alleged event and analyzes them critically. He shows that these sources contradict each other in every essential point, rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original war-time documents inflict a final blow to the tale of the first homicidal gassing.

Every historical proposition that moves the world depends critically on its purported genesis. Pointing to “how it all began” decides whether the masses will accept or reject the story. Hence unparalleled efforts were made to concoct a historical origin for the gas chamber myth, with which then an unprecedented world propaganda was started: The story of “the first gassing.”

But this study demonstrates that the officially sanctioned version of this alleged event turns out to be mere fiction, an invention of political historiography with no historical basis at all. Third, slightly corrected edition.

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MATTOGNO · AUSCHWITZ: THE FIRST GASSING

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## Rumor and Reality



**BY CARLO MATTOGNO**

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# **Auschwitz: The First Gassing**

Rumor and Reality

**Carlo Mattogno**



**Castle Hill Publishers**  
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Cover Illustrations: Bottom: Part of a 1944 photo shows high-ranking SS officers gathered at Solahütte, the SS retreat outside of Auschwitz. Other photos (left to right; all © Carlo Mattogno): Block 11, inside, right side, door to cell no. 25; Block 11, outside, wall facing NE, entry door; Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, cell no. 21.

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## Preface to the Third Edition

This work is the first of a set of four studies which were prepared at different times yet which lay out the same general theme in a chronological and logical sequence: the genesis and development of the alleged homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The orthodox history of Auschwitz<sup>1</sup> is known to be based on an order to exterminate the Jews of Europe – allegedly sent by Hitler to Himmler in the spring of 1941 and from there to the Auschwitz camp commander Rudolf Höss. This order is said to have materialized in the construction of the alleged extermination camp of Birkenau. This order, according to the interpretation that has become canonical, was implemented progressively in four stages:

1. In September 1941 the first experimental homicidal gassing was allegedly carried out at Auschwitz using Zyklon B, which is said to represent the “discovery” of the chemical weapon for the subsequent mass extermination.
2. At the beginning of 1942 the activity of homicidal gassing is said to have been transferred to the morgue of the crematorium at the Auschwitz Main Camp.
3. In the following months, two houses located outside the Birkenau camp were purportedly converted into homicidal gas chambers (the so-called “Bunkers”) and began the mass extermination of Jews and sick prisoners.
4. In March 1943, finally, the extermination activities are claimed to have been moved into the four crematoria of Birkenau, all allegedly equipped with gas chambers.

I have investigated these four stages in four extensive studies as mentioned above, namely:

- *Auschwitz: The First Gassing*, the present study (the first Italian edition by Edizioni di Ar, Padua, 1992)

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<sup>1</sup> By this I mean the version disseminated by the Auschwitz Museum, which is the repository of orthodox historiography on Auschwitz.

- *Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassing*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, December 2005
- *Debunking the Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda versus History*. 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, February 2016 (the first edition had appeared with the title *The Bunkers of Auschwitz*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, December 2004)
- *The Real Case for Auschwitz: Robert van Pelt's Evidence from the Irving Trial Critically Reviewed*," Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, April 2015 (the first edition had appeared in two volumes with the title *Auschwitz: The Case for Sanity: A Historical and Technical Study of Jean-Claude Pressac's "Criminal Traces" and Robert Jan van Pelt's "Convergence of Evidence*, The Barnes Review, Washington, D.C., September 2010)

The last entry in this list has 758 pages, which is five times as voluminous as any of the other three books, as it deals with the fourth, best documented and most important stage, the alleged gassings in the crematoria of Birkenau.

The first entry is herewith published in a third, slightly corrected edition.

## Introduction

Since the original Italian version of this book was published in 1992, there have been numerous new developments in the subject's historiography, although none of them has been important enough to mandate a change of this book's conclusions.

Even today, 24 years later, official historiography has not only failed to produce a reply to this study, although it has been translated into French,<sup>2</sup> English<sup>3</sup> and German,<sup>4</sup> but in its obdurate historical dogmatism has not even found it necessary to address the topic in greater depth.<sup>5</sup> It is, however, more important than ever before.

The first homicidal gassing in the Auschwitz concentration camp was allegedly carried out between September 3 and 5, 1941, in the basement of Building (Block) 13. This building was later named Block 11 because of an administrative change in the numbering of the buildings. This first gassing is said to have been the starting point of the alleged mass extermination process at Auschwitz. After having gone through the intermediate stages of the mortuary in Crematorium I of the *Stammlager* (Auschwitz Main Camp) and the so-called "Bunkers" at Birkenau, this claimed extermination process later led to the alleged homicidal gas chambers of the Birkenau Crematoria II through V. As such, the first homicidal gassing would therefore constitute the birth of the homicidal gas chambers and mark the "official" introduction of Zyklon B into the Auschwitz holocaust history. Moreover, it would also constitute the archetype of the alleged "selections" of registered detainees in the camp hospitals for the "gas chambers."

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<sup>2</sup> *Auschwitz: le premier gazage*, Stiftung Vrij Historisch Onderzoek, Berchem, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> *Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality*, 1st ed., Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2005; 2nd ed., The Barnes Review, Washington, DC, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> *Auschwitz: Die Erste Vergasung. Gerüchte und Wirklichkeit*, Castle Hill Publishers, Hastings, 2007; 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2014.

<sup>5</sup> This includes Sandra Holtermann's seminar paper, *Die erste Vergasung in Auschwitz im September 1941*, GRIN Verlag, Munich 2005, which, if printed, would hardly reach 20 pages of text (it is available only as an eBook). It thus had to remain superficial.



A book published in 2005 underlines the importance which this presumed event has for orthodox historiography:<sup>6</sup>

*“This first mass gassing was no longer just a mere experiment in order to find out whether Zyklon B was really suited for the systematic mass murder of humans. During those September days the basic test run took place for mass extermination with gas in Auschwitz. During those moments the killing procedure was established, which was later refined and adjusted as needed.”*

From this event the principle of the division of labor during the alleged mass extermination process is also claimed to have originated – that is, assigning specific tasks to various teams of prisoners – and the tactics of using a code language.<sup>7</sup>

The consequence of this notable inertia on the part of official historiography is that any scholarly literature on this topic is, as yet, practically non-existent. Up until 1992, only a single Polish article of 1972 had been dedicated to this subject,<sup>8</sup> aside from my own contribution presented at the “Ninth International Revisionist Conference” of 1989,<sup>9</sup> which I later expanded to the present study. Because the Polish article mentioned above had appeared in a Polish journal, it remained practically unnoticed by western specialists on Auschwitz until 1987, when an abridged translation became available in German.<sup>10</sup> Hence, for decades – and practically even today – the main and almost sole historical source for this topic has been Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau*.

Only an exceedingly small number of specialists of the camp’s history later looked into the first gassing at Auschwitz, and then only in a very perfunctory way, although the enormous documentation contained in the archives of the *Zentralbauleitung* (Central Construction Office) as preserved

<sup>6</sup> Eric Friedler, Barbara Siebert, Andreas Kilian, *Zeugen aus der Todeszone. Das jüdische Sonderkommando in Auschwitz*. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, 2005, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Stanisław Kłodziński, “Pierwsze zagazowanie więźniów i jeńców w obozie oświęcimskim” (The first gassing of detainees and prisoners of war in the Auschwitz camp), *Przegląd Lekarski* (Medical review), No. 1, 1972.

<sup>9</sup> C. Mattogno, “The First Gassing at Auschwitz: Genesis of a Myth,” *The Journal of Historical Review*, 9(2) (1989), pp. 193-222.

<sup>10</sup> S. Kłodziński, “Die erste Vergasung von Häftlingen und Kriegsgefangenen im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz,” Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (ed.), *Die Auschwitz-Hefte. Texte der polnischen Zeitschrift ‘Przegląd Lekarski’ über historische, psychische und medizinische Aspekte des Lebens in Auschwitz.*, Beltz-Verlag, Weinheim/Basel 1987, Vol. 1, pp. 261-275.

in Moscow has meanwhile been studied extensively. There is a very simple explanation for this: this documentation does not contain even the vaguest indication in support of an alleged homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11.

Having searched those archives, Jean-Claude Pressac devoted half a page to the topic in 1993, writing:<sup>11</sup>

*“Today, the first homicidal gassing in the Auschwitz camp is considered to have taken place in the basement of Block 11 between December 5 and the end of that month (earlier on, it was dated September 3 to 5).*

*Witnesses claim that it concerned 250 inmates judged to be terminally ill and some 600 Soviet prisoners who arrived at the camp on October 7. During the month of November, a special Gestapo commission from Kattowitz was in session in the concentration camp aiming to identify among the prisoners ‘fanatical’ communists for liquidation; by the end of November, 300 had been selected.*

*The openings of the basement having been covered with dirt, Zyklon B was introduced and the door was closed. According to Höss (who was not present) death is said to have occurred immediately. Others speak of a gassing that took two days, involving a second load of toxic [gas], the first not having killed all victims.*

*The fact that hydrogen cyanide has a vaporization point of 27°C, that it was used in an as yet unheated basement in the middle of the Silesian winter, and a lack of knowledge concerning the lethal dose might explain the overly long duration of this gassing.*

*The victims, somewhere between 550 and 850, were incinerated in the two double-muffle ovens of the crematorium over a period of one to two weeks of intensive work, which damaged the second oven.”*

The change of date proposed by Jean-Claude Pressac has no foundation in documents. He has simply taken as a historical fact a hypothesis of mine, which appears on p. 159 of the Italian edition of the present study (cf. below, Chapter V.1.). The sources Pressac cites in note 110 on p. 101 – Jan Sehn and Kazimierz Smoleń – are the very sources from which I drew the said conclusion.

Concerning the “overly long duration” of the gassing, I refer the reader to what I have written in Chapter IV.6.3. Here, I must point out another error of J.-C. Pressac’s which will deliver the *coup de grâce* to his explanation: it is not true that Block 11 was unheated in December 1941. In fact, a

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<sup>11</sup> Jean-Claude Pressac, *Les crématoires d’Auschwitz. La machinerie du meurtre de masse*. CNRS Editions, Paris 1993, p. 34.

heating device had been installed in this building by the end of May 1941.<sup>12</sup>

Pressac's reference to the damage to the second furnace has no provable relationship with the cremation of the corpses of those allegedly gassed. In fact, in the letter of January 31, 1942, quoted by Pressac, Maximilian Grabner, the head of the Political Department at Auschwitz, did not mention in any way an "intensive load" on the oven. He merely requests the Construction Office to repair the second oven by making use of the presence of a Topf engineer, who was at that time installing the third oven.<sup>13</sup>

I will address the question of the "lack of knowledge about the lethal dose" of hydrogen cyanide in Chapter I.

J.-C. Pressac returned to the argument in an interview given by him in 1995, which, however, was obviously edited prior to its publication. Referring specifically to my study, he expressed a reasonable skepticism:<sup>14</sup>

*"Mattogno has also looked into the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz, which the Poles claim to have taken place between September 3 and 5 in the basement of Block 11 of the Main Camp. According to the Poles, this gassing is the direct consequence of the order given to commander Höss by Himmler himself in Berlin; in the summer of 1941 to be precise. Except that [the gassing] involved Russian prisoners and terminally ill patients, but not Jews. Initially, Mattogno concluded that this was a simple invention, later, that this incident did not have a historical basis. I have talked to the Poles about this question. Here is the somewhat off-handed reply: 'This gassing began on the anniversary of an inmate who was present and who therefore remembers the date precisely.' The inmate in question by the name of Michal Kula had declared to remember it very well, because it was the day of his arrival at the camp, August 15 ... and not September 3. It is now known that Höss did not receive the order to kill the Jews in the summer of 1941, but at the beginning of June, 1942.*

*If this gassing did take place, it was in December of 1941 or even in January of 1942 and had nothing to do with the massacre of the Jews." (Emp. added)*

<sup>12</sup> "Block 13 (Zellengebäude) Heizungsanlage fertiggestellt," (Block 13 (cell building) heating installation completed). "Tätigkeitsbericht vom 5. bis 10. Mai 1941," RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 52. The numbering of the Blocks was later changed (Block 13 became Block 11).

<sup>13</sup> RGVA, 512-1-312, p. 77.

<sup>14</sup> "Entretien avec Jean-Claude Pressac réalisé par Valérie Igounet, à la Ville du Bois, le jeudi 15 juin 1995," in: V. Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 2000, p. 644.



In the five-volume anthology *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Fundamental problems of the history of the camp*, which appeared in 1995 and which represents the authoritative history of the Auschwitz Museum, little more than four pages are devoted to the first homicidal gassing in the section written by Franciszek Piper titled “Gas chambers and crematoria.”<sup>15</sup>

An abridged version of this section, published a year earlier in English, deals with the question in half a page.<sup>16</sup>

The year 1995 also saw the publication of the three volumes of the *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz* (death books of A.),<sup>17</sup> which made possible a more accurate analysis of the fate of those 135 inmates of Block 28 who are said to have been gassed in Block 11 (cf. below, Chapter V.2), but the historicity of the first homicidal gassing has not been strengthened in any appreciable way by this token. The first volume of this work contains, in fact, a long article by Kazimierz Smoleń on the “Soviet prisoners of war in concentration camp Auschwitz,”<sup>18</sup> which also deals with the first homicidal gassing in Block 11, but without contributing an original idea – let alone new documents – to this topic. The author limits himself to the well-known sources of Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium*, Rudolf Höss, and Wiesław Kielar.<sup>19</sup>

In his *summa holocaustica* on Auschwitz, Robert Jan van Pelt has treated the question of the first gassing with conspicuous brevity, making use only of an article dated July 1st, 1942, of a single eyewitness, Wojciech Barcz, and of a pamphlet published in 1943.<sup>20</sup> I shall analyze these sources in Chapter III.

As I have underlined above, the principal historiographic source for the topic of the first homicidal gassing is still the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*. In the first German edition of this work, its author Danuta Czech described the event as follows:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> W. Długoborski, F. Piper (eds.), *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Węzłowe zagadnienia z dziejów obozu*. Wydawnictwo Państowego Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1995, Vol. III, pp. 97-102.

<sup>16</sup> F. Piper, “Gas Chambers and Crematoria,” in: Israel Gutman, Michael Berenbaum (eds.), *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1994, pp. 157f.

<sup>17</sup> Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (ed.), *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz*, K.G. Saur, Munich/New Providence/London/Paris 1995, 3 volumes.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, “Sowjetische Kriegsgefangene im KL Auschwitz,” Vol. I, pp. 127-161.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.132f.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 2002, pp. 88, 144, 146.

<sup>21</sup> D. Czech, “Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau,”

*“September 3. For the first time tests were done at concentration camp Auschwitz for the mass killing of human beings by means of gas – Zyklon B. Ordered to do so by the SS, paramedics moved 250 sick inmates from the inmate hospital into the basement cells of Block 11. Some 600 Soviet prisoners of war were herded into these cells as well. (In the POW camps, officers and political commissars had been singled out in accordance with order No. 8 of July 17, 1941). Once they had been lodged in the cells of the Bunker, the basement windows were closed by means of dirt, SS-men poured in the Zyklon-gas, and the doors were shut.*

*September 4. Section leader Palitzsch, wearing a gas mask, opened the doors of the Bunker cells and discovered that a number of inmates were still alive. Another load of Zyklon B was therefore introduced and the doors were shut once again.*

*September 5. In the evening, 20 inmates from the penal company (Block 5a) and paramedics from the inmate hospital were led to the yard of Block 11. Previously, they had been told that they were to do a special type of work and were not to speak to anyone about what they would see, under threat of death. They were also promised a suitably increased food ration once the work was done. The officers Fritzsich, Mayer, Palitzsch, camp surgeon Entress, and others were present in the yard of Block 11. The inmates were issued gas masks and were ordered to go into the basement and to carry the corpses of the gassed into the yard. The uniforms of the gassed Soviet prisoners were removed and the corpses thrown on wagons. The gassed inmates wore camp uniforms. The transfer of the corpses to the crematorium lasted well into the night. Among those gassed were the 10 inmates moved into the Bunker on account of the escape of detainee Nowaczyk.”*

In the second German edition of the *Kalendarium*, Danuta Czech added new details to the account – many contradicting those of the previous edition – and indicated also the archive references (mostly testimony from the Höss trial):<sup>22</sup>

*“September 3. Now that the killing by gas, ordered a few days ago by Karl Fritzsich to be tested on a small group of Russian POWs, has succeeded, the camp directorate decides to repeat this test in the basement of Block 11. In all likelihood, this is linked to the news that the Gestapo was planning to bring in a major transport of officers, people’s commissars, and prisoners of war for liquidation. In this connection, camp surgeon SS-Hauptsturm-*

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*Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, no. 2, 1959, p. 109.

<sup>22</sup> D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*. Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek 1989, pp. 117-119.

fürer Dr. Siegfried Schwela orders a selection to be carried out in the inmate hospital, resulting in the singling out of some 250 inmates. The paramedics are ordered to take the selected inmates into the Bunker of Block 11, by means of stretchers if necessary. In the Bunker, they are herded into a few cells. The basement windows are closed by means of dirt. Then 600 Russian POWs, officers and people's commissars, are herded into the cells, they have been selected by a special Gestapo command in the POW camps. Once the POWs have been lodged in the cells and the SS-men have thrown in the Zyklon B gas, the doors are shut and made gas-tight. This action takes place after the evening roll-call, during the curfew, i.e., the inmates are prohibited from leaving their blocks and moving around in the camp. September 4. In the morning, section leader Gerhard Palitzsch, protected by a gas mask, opens the cell doors and notes that some of the POWs are still alive. As a consequence, more Zyklon B is thrown in and the doors are closed once more.

In the afternoon, all doors of Bunker 11 are opened and the gaskets are removed, as it has been ascertained that the second dose of Zyklon B has killed the Russian POWs and the Polish inmates. One waits for the gas to dissipate. After the evening roll call, curfew is again ordered.

During the night, section leader Palitzsch calls in 20 inmates from the penal company, as well as all the paramedics from the sickbay and the inmates Eugeniusz Obojski and Teofil Banasiuk, who are corpse carriers operating two carts for the transportation of corpses in the mortuary and the crematorium. All of them are taken to the yard of Block 11. Prior to that they have been told that they are to do special work and have been informed not to mention to anyone what they would get to see, under pain of death. At the same time they are promised better food rations once the work is done. SS officers Fritzsich, Maier, Palitzsch, as well as SS-surgeon Schwela and SS personnel acting as block leaders in the camp are already waiting in the yard of Block 11. Inmates Obojski and Banasiuk are issued gas masks and accompany Palitzsch and other SS personnel, also wearing gas masks, down into the cellars of Block 11.

They return from the cellars without gas masks, thus showing that the gas has dissipated. The inmates are divided into four groups. One group, with gas masks, brings the corpses of those killed from the cellars up to the ground floor, a second one removes the clothing of those killed. A third group carries the corpses into the yard of Block 11 where they are loaded onto carts by the fourth group. The dead Russian POWs are in uniform; their pockets contain documents, family photographs, money, miscellaneous objects, and cigarettes. In the yard, dental surgeons supervised by SS personnel remove gold crowns and gold teeth. The inmates drag the carts, fully loaded with the corpses of the POWs and the Polish inmates, from the yard of Block 11 to the crematorium; they are led by Obojski and Banasiuk



*and supervised by SS personnel. Among the dead are the corpses of ten inmates, who had been sent to the Bunker on September 1st as punishment for the escape of the inmate Jan Nowaczek and condemned to death by camp commander Fritzs. The corpses of those selected in the camp hospital are in their underwear. Bringing up the corpses, undressing them, searching them, and removing them takes until morning and is not yet finished by then.*

*September 5. After the evening roll-call, curfew is ordered. The same group of inmates active the night before marches into the yard of Block 11 in order to finish removing the corpses to the crematorium. Once there, the corpses are placed into a large and long hall, which is already half full. The crematorium command cannot keep up with the incineration of the corpses. Several more days are needed for the incineration of all corpses."*

As we will see in the following chapters, this version was produced by the investigating judge Jan Sehn in 1946 on the basis of Michał Kula's testimony.

The aim of this study is to verify the historiographical soundness and historical reliability of this account and, in so doing, to verify the reality of the first homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11 of Auschwitz.

The text presented here in English is an updated, corrected and enhanced version of the original Italian edition, augmented by new sources, which I have discovered over the last 24 years.

Some arguments, which had a novel character in 1992 (in particular the critique of Rudolf Höss's declarations), can now be regarded as having been accepted at least by revisionist historiography and known to all. I have therefore decided to leave them aside.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, several hypothetical arguments have been omitted in this revised text that have not been sufficiently confirmed.

Carlo Mattogno  
Rome, March 2016

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<sup>23</sup> See in this regard my studies *The Real Case for Auschwitz*, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015, Chapter 11, "Critical Analysis of the Testimonies of Rudolf Höss," pp. 417-431, and *Raul Hilberg e i "centri di sterminio" nazionalsocialisti. Fonti e metodologia*, Rome 2008, in: <http://vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres8/CMhilberg.pdf>, Chap. III, 4-5, pp. 105-112.

## Chapter I: Genesis and Significance of the First Gassing

Because of what the account of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz describes and what it has come to mean, it has its place in a little known historical context, which must be outlined briefly before we can approach the subject in greater detail.

The First World War brought with it the massive use of poisonous airborne chemicals by all belligerents. Between 1914 and 1918, some 250,000 tons of such materials were fabricated, and the casualties due to gas were about one million soldiers, of whom 78,000 died.<sup>24</sup> In the summer of 1917, between Neuilly and the left bank of the Maas River on a frontline ten kilometers (about six miles) wide, some 400,000 gas grenades were launched, thousands more in August and October near Verdun, and in December of 1917 on the Russian front.<sup>25</sup> By 1918, gas grenades made up 50% of the projectiles stocked in the arsenals of the German artillery. In a single day during the spring offensive of 1918 the Germans launched 200,000 rounds of Yprite.<sup>26</sup>

After the end of the war, toxic chemicals were further developed – especially for tactical purposes – in all countries that had been involved in the conflict. Instruction manuals and government publications were issued, as well as a wide array of technical literature.<sup>27</sup> From a scientific point of view, the fundamental work was undoubtedly the German book *Toxic Gases, Vapors, Fogs, Smoke and Particulates*<sup>28</sup> by Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik.

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<sup>24</sup> Attilio Izzo, *Guerra chimica e difesa antigas*, Editore Ulrico Hoepli, Milan 1935, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 445-448.

<sup>28</sup> F. Flury, F. Zernik, *Schädliche Gase, Dämpfe, Nebel, Rauch- und Staubarten*, Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin 1931. Similar information can be found in the Italian tome by Michele Giua, *Lezioni di aggressivi chimici. Parte descrittiva e tecnologica*, R. Accademia e della Scuola di Applicazione di Artiglieria e Genio, Turin 1933. Another important work appeared in 1933: *Chimica delle sostanze aggressive*, edited by Dr. Mario Sar-

Even though the use of aggressive chemicals had been banned by the 1925 Geneva Convention on gases,<sup>29</sup> they were considered by all former belligerents for a possible future war. An Italian book dated 1935 opens with the following lines, which reflect the spirit of the time:<sup>30</sup>

*“Recent air exercises in various countries have demonstrated that it is impossible to prevent bombardments and the use of gas against an open city by means of anti-air defenses.”*

The preface of a 1937 manual about the defense against noxious gases by the British government stated:<sup>31</sup>

*“The measures for safeguarding the civil population against the effects of air attack which these Handbooks describe have become a necessary part of the defensive organisation of any country which is open to air attack. The need for them is not related to any belief that war is imminent. It arises from the fact that the risk of attack from the air, however remote it may be, is a risk that cannot be ignored, and because preparations to minimise the consequences of attack from the air cannot be improvised on the spur of the moment but must be made, if they are to be effective, in time of peace.”*

The extent to which the protection against toxic gases was an issue is testified by the German magazine *Gasschutz und Luftschutz. Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet des Gas- und Luftschutzes der Zivilbevölkerung*, established in 1931, which from the outset collected prestigious contributions on the question of protection against chemical weapons.

As we shall see in Chapter III, in 1941 the story of the first gassing in German concentration camps developed along such lines.

In 1946, the Polish investigating judge Jan Sehn, in his famous report on the results of the inquiry into the Auschwitz camp, elaborated the fundamental idea which was to guide orthodox historiography in decades to come. Sehn placed the first gassing within the framework of the alleged

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tori, a chemist at the Center for Military Chemistry in Rome. It was translated into German two years later with the title *Die Chemie der Kampfstoffe* (Friedrich Vieweg & Sohn, Braunschweig 1935).

<sup>29</sup> The relevant protocol prohibits the use of “asphyxiating, toxic or other types of gases and bacteriological methods of warfare.” United States Army Judge Advocate General (ed.), *Law of War Documentary Supplement*, International and Operational Law Department, The United States Army Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School Charlottesville, Va, 2009, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> M.G. Gusman, *Contro il flagello del gas nemico*, Editrice Napoletana, Naples 1935, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Air Raid Precautions. Handbook No. 1. Personal Protection against Gas*. His Majesty’s Stationery Office, London 1937, p. 3.

plan for the extermination of the Jews that was to be implemented in that camp:<sup>32</sup>

*“All these methods of assassination could not, however, eliminate those detainees who were unfit for work; in particular, they could not accomplish the enormous tasks associated with the annihilation of giant transports of hundreds of thousands of Jews who were almost exclusively destined to be exterminated on the spot.*

*For this reason, the Germans organized the mass murder of people by means of gas. These methods were tested during the summer of 1941 in the Bunker of Block 11 on 250 inmate patients brought in from the camp sick-bays, and on 600 prisoners of war. Once the victims had entered, the windows of the basement were covered with earth, and an SS man with a gas mask emptied the contents of the Zyklon B cans through the door and closed it. The next day, around noon, Palitsch [sic], wearing a gas mask, opened the door of the Bunker and discovered that some inmates were still alive. More Zyklon was then added, and the door was closed again.<sup>[33]</sup> It was opened only in the evening of the following day. By then all inmates were dead.”*

Jan Sehn’s interpretation was then re-elaborated by former Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss in his Polish prison and furnished the basis for the description of the extermination of Soviet POWs.

In the text *“Die Endlösung der Judenfrage”* prepared in Krakow in November of 1946, Rudolf Höss describes his well-known alleged meeting with Himmler in Berlin *“im Sommer 1941”* (in the summer of 1941).<sup>34</sup> On that occasion the *Reichsführer-SS* had allegedly informed him that the Führer had decided on “the final solution of the Jewish question” – or rather, in a blatant historiographic anachronism, on the alleged extermination

<sup>32</sup> J. Sehn, “Obóz koncentracyjny i zagłady Oświęcim” (The Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp), *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji badania zbrodni niemieckich w Polsce*, Vol. I, Poznań 1946, p. 120.

<sup>33</sup> According to Jan Sehn the gassing took place in the entire basement, including the hallway, yet for Danuta Czech it occurred only inside the prison cells. Therefore the former stated “the Bunker door” (see photos 9-11 in the Appendix), whereas the latter wrote “the cell doors of the Bunker.”

<sup>34</sup> The inescapable chronological contradictions within Rudolf Höss’s statements led orthodox Holocaust historian Karin Orth to date his alleged meeting with Himmler a year later. K. Orth, “Rudolf Höss und die ‘Endlösung der Judenfrage.’ Drei Argumente gegen deren Datierung auf den Sommer 1941,” in: *Werkstattgeschichte*, 18, November 1997, pp. 45-57. But by so doing, it is claimed that Höss set up the alleged “extermination machine” before having received the order from Himmler. See in this regard my study *Hitler e il nemico di Razza*, Edizioni di Ar, Padua 2009, pp. 69-81.

of the Jews<sup>35</sup> – and that Auschwitz was to become the central place for that extermination.<sup>36</sup>

*“Shortly thereafter, Eichmann came to see me at Auschwitz. He explained to me the details of the actions planned for the various countries. [...] We then discussed the implementation of the extermination. Only gas would be considered. [...] Eichmann returned to Berlin to inform RFSS about our discussion. [...] At the end of November, a general meeting of the staff of the Jewish Department took place at Eichmann’s office, to which I was invited as well. [...] I was not in a position to find out the date set for the action. Furthermore, Eichmann had so far not been in a position to procure an appropriate gas.*

*In the fall of 1941, a Secret Special Order given to the POW camps called for the identification by the Gestapo of the Russian Politruks, commissars and, in particular, political officers; they were transferred to the nearest concentration camp for liquidation. On a routine basis, Auschwitz received smaller transports of this type; they were killed by shooting in the gravel pit near the Monopol buildings or in the yard of Block 11. While I was away on a mission, my deputy, Hauptsturmführer Fritsch had used gas on his own initiative for the liquidation of these POWs in such a way that he herded the Russians into the individual cells located in the basement and then, using a gas mask, he threw Cyklon B into the cells, which caused the immediate death. [...]*

*When Eichmann came the next time I advised him about this use of Cyklon B, and we decided to use this gas for the future mass annihilations. Killing of the Russian POWs mentioned above by means of Cyklon B was continued, but Block 11 was no longer used, because after the gassing the entire building had to be ventilated for at least two days.”*

Rudolf Höss later came back to this topic in his “Autobiography,” which he wrote in February of 1947:<sup>37</sup>

*“Before the mass annihilation of the Jews began, however, the Russian politruks and political commissars were liquidated in nearly all concentration camps in 1941/42. According to a secret decree of the Führer, special Gestapo commands selected the Russian politruks and political commissars*

<sup>35</sup> As late as February 10, 1942, the term “Endlösung” (final solution) certainly still referred to the Madagascar project, as is irrefutably demonstrated by the letter written by Franz Rademacher (Head of the Jewish Department in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to minister Bielfeld in the same Ministry. NG-5770. See C. Mattogno, *Raul Hilberg...*, op. cit. (note 23), chapters I,1-2, pp. 5-14.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Broszat (ed.), *Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen des Rudolf Höss*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich 1981, pp. 157-159.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125f.



*in all POW camps. Those selected were moved to the nearest concentration camp for liquidation. [...].*

*Thus, such selected political officers of the Red Army also came to Auschwitz for liquidation. The first – smaller – transports were shot by execution details of the military.*

*While [I was] away on a mission, my deputy, head of the protective custody camp Fritsch, had used gas for killing. It was the hydrogen cyanide preparation Cyklon B, which was commonly used in the camp for disinfection and was readily available. He informed me about this after my return, and for the following transport this gas was used again. The gassing was implemented in the stockade cells of Bunker 11. I observed the killing, protected by a gas mask. Death in the crowded cells occurred immediately upon introduction [of the gas]. There was only a short, almost strangled, outcry, and it was over. I did not really register this first homicidal gassing, perhaps I was too much impressed by the general procedure.”*

A comment contained in a publication by the Auschwitz Museum underscores the degree of reliability of this witness with respect to the first gassing:<sup>38</sup>

*“From previous investigations results that the first test to use gas for killing took place in the basement of Block 11. A further killing of inmates in this block could not be ascertained. Even though Höss denies his presence at this first test killing, he does admit his presence a few lines further along when he writes: ‘I did not really register this first homicidal gassing, perhaps I was too much impressed by the general procedure. I remember more distinctly the gassing of 900 Russians soon afterwards in the old crematorium, as the use of Block 11 was too cumbersome.’”*

In fact, Rudolf Höss has declared explicitly that he was present at the first gassing, wearing a gas mask. The conclusion is that he witnessed the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz while being away from the camp!

Let us now consider the consequences arising from the above statements as far as the present study is concerned. First of all, as Rudolf Höss declared after having been summoned by Himmler in June of 1941<sup>39</sup> and as Eichmann traveled to Auschwitz “*kurze Zeit danach*”<sup>40</sup> (shortly thereafter),

<sup>38</sup> Jadwiga Bezwinska, Danuta Czech (eds.), *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS. Rudolf Höss, Pery Broad, Johann Paul Kremer*, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim 1997, note 107 on p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> NO-1210/D-749a; PS-3868.

<sup>40</sup> There exists no document regarding this visit. Eichmann did declare that he went to Auschwitz on three occasions, but during the “Ungarn-Angelegenheit” (Hungarian matter), i.e. in 1944. State of Israel. Ministry of Justice, *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, Jerusalem 1995, Vol. VII, p. 220.

Eichmann had not been able to identify a suitable gas for the planned mass murder of the Jews during the five months between June and the end of November 1941.

Secondly, because Eichmann had not yet been able to find such a gas at the time of the meeting in late November 1941, and because Rudolf Höss informed him about Fritzsche's experiment "on Eichmann's next visit,"<sup>41</sup> the first gassing can have taken place only *after* the end of November 1941. This dating is, however, in explicit disagreement with the official entry in Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium*: September 3, 1941.

Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter V, the first Soviet POWs arrived at Auschwitz only *in early October of 1941*. From November on, they were being examined by a Gestapo commission that identified some 300 political commissars among them, some of whom were then executed in small groups. Considering the rather small amount of prisoners affected, and leaving aside the chronological contradiction with respect to the official texts, there was therefore no compelling motive for gassing these detainees rather than shooting them.

The assertion that Eichmann, working under highest orders, had been unable to find a suitable gas for the exterminations over a period of five months is quite unbelievable. Any layman would have easily been able to find texts concerning toxic gasses in any German technical library; in particular the comprehensive work by Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik. In this compendium of over 600 pages, technical and chemical details are given for all the toxic gases known in the early 1930s, including the 34 poison chemicals used by the belligerents during the First World War. An Italian researcher at the time noted:<sup>42</sup>

*"[I]t is undeniable that Germany, at the beginning of the war, was far superior in chemistry, both scientific and technical or industrial. [...] the scientific section, i.e. the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin, directed by professor Haber, who can be said to have been the mastermind behind the initiative for and the research into the means of chemical warfare, [...] was the official center for development and can be credited with many brilliant discoveries in the chemical, physical, and medical fields."*

Among the toxic gasses tested during World War I was also hydrogen cyanide, which the French called "Vincenite," a chemical of which 4,000 tons were manufactured during the war. It contained a mixture of 50% hydrogen cyanide, 30% arsenic trichloride, 15% stannic tetrachloride, and 5%

<sup>41</sup> This visit is not sustained by any documents either.

<sup>42</sup> Attilio Izzo, *op. cit.* (note 24), p. 66.

chloroform, and was used as a warhead in ordnance shells.<sup>42</sup> Other cyanides, such as cyano-chloride (“Mauguinite”) and cyano-bromide (“Campiellite”) were also used.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Eichmann could have solved his problem within a week, even if he had had to do all the work himself. Having received the order from Himmler, as Rudolf Höss tells us, he could have found the solution without any effort whatsoever and even faster by turning to the Hygienic Institute of the *Waffen-SS* in Berlin,<sup>44</sup> headed from 1943 onward by *SS-Standartenführer* Joachim Mrugowski. The competence of this body in the field of highly toxic gases for disinfestation is borne out, *i.a.*, by one of its publications of 1943.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, hydrogen cyanide, said to have been accidentally “hit upon” by Fritzsche, was in normal use for disinfestations at Auschwitz in the form of Zyklon B, and all the regulations regarding its use stress its extreme toxicity.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the gas for the alleged exterminations was already known and available to everyone concerned.

Jean-Claude Pressac initially attributed to the first gassing the character of a first experimental testing of hydrogen cyanide for mass exterminations.<sup>47</sup>

*“Because the lethal dose for humans was not known, the SS had made a botched trial gassing in the basement of Bunker 11 of the Main Camp on 3rd, 4th and 5th September 1941, the victims being 850 Soviet POWs and other prisoners. It was subsequently seen to be more convenient to gas people as required in the very place where all corpses inevitably had to go eventually: the morgue of Crematorium I.”*

Some testimonies summarized by Stanisław Kłodziński go even further:<sup>48</sup>

*“The detainee Dr. Eng. Artur Krzetuski (ID 1003) recalls that the preparations for the use of gas (Zyklon B) on humans began by observing the effect of gassings on pests, mostly bugs and fleas. This information is confirmed by the detainee Jan Liwacz employed in the metal workshop [Schlosserei]*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67f.

<sup>44</sup> In this regard see my study *Raul Hilberg...*, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 146-148.

<sup>45</sup> Joachim Mrugowski (ed.), *Arbeitsanweisungen für Klinik und Laboratorium des Hygiene-Institutes der Waffen-SS, Berlin*, issue no. 3: Walter Dötzer, “Entkeimung, Entseuchung und Entwesung,” Urban und Schwarzenberg, Berlin/Vienna 1943.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. my article, “The ‘Gas Testers’ of Auschwitz. Testing for Zyklon B Gas Residues. Documents – Missed and Misunderstood,” *The Revisionist*, 2(2) (2004), pp. 140-155.

<sup>47</sup> J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York 1989, p. 184.

<sup>48</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 82.

*of the Industriebhof [industrial area]: he remembers that a few weeks prior to the events that took place in the Bunker of Block 13, camp commander Höss, his deputy Fritzsich, section leader Palitzsch, and SS-man Lachmann from the Political Department came to the workshop. They sent away all the detainees and ran a test gassing of the shop with Zyklon B. The next day, opened gas containers were found in the area.”*

At the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, the former Polish detainee Eugeniusz Motz declared:<sup>49</sup>

*“In 1941, I spent three months in the clothing depot, between August and October, give or take a month. My boss there was Breitwieser, his deputy Reichenbacher; the capo came from Silesia, his successor was Walter Petzold. During that time, a first test was run for the delousing of the dirty laundry by means of gas. We had to patch up all cracks in the room; Breitwieser took a gas mask and sprinkled the gas on the laundry, after which we also had to seal the door. The next day, Breitwieser got his gas mask, opened the door and the window(s), the room was ventilated, and the laundry was then taken away to be washed. In our presence, Breitwieser said to Reichenbacher: ‘Now we also have something to exterminate the inmates with.’”*

Hence, the SS would have tested the effect of hydrogen cyanide on bugs and fleas in preparation of the first homicidal gassing!

Jean-Claude Pressac’s explanation is without foundation, because the lethal dose of hydrogen cyanide on humans had been clearly known for several years. The scientific work by Ferdinand Flury and Frank Zernik mentioned above gives an accurate description of the toxicological symptoms of hydrogen cyanide on humans and states, *i.a.*:<sup>50</sup>

*“Low concentrations (around 0.05 mg/l or 45 ppm) cause only headache, nausea, vomiting, palpitations; these symptoms disappear after some time. Higher concentrations from around 0.1 mg/l or 90 ppm on up are life-threatening or rapidly fatal. At intermediate concentrations, first symptoms will appear only after some minutes. Death usually occurs within an hour. If respiration still exists at that time, recovery is possible. Occasionally, though, delayed death occurs even after 24 hours. High concentrations – around some 0.3 mg/l or 270 ppm – cause death quickly: with a feeling of compression and sudden screams, the so-called ‘hydrocephalic scream’*

<sup>49</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (eds.), *Der Auschwitz-Prozeß*. Digitale Bibliothek. Verlag der Directmedia Publishing, 2005, pp. 25679-25681. The witness deposed through an interpreter. The quote contains only his answers. Cf. Hermann Langbein, *Der Auschwitz Prozeß. Eine Dokumentation*, Europa Verlag, Vienna/Frankfurt/Zürich 1965, Vol. 2, p. 788.

<sup>50</sup> F. Flury, F. Zernik, *op. cit.* (note 28), p. 404.

*(Lewin), there is collapse, cramps ensue, breathing stops after a few minutes, and death occurs after 6-8 minutes.”*

The two authors then include a table titled “Toxicity of inhaled hydrogen cyanide according to Lehmann-Hess,” which shows that a concentration of 0.3 mg of hydrogen cyanide per liter of air (about 270 ppm) – the highest one considered – is “immediately fatal.”<sup>51</sup> Two further tables concerning the effect of toxic gasses and vapors on human beings – which would have solved Eichmann’s research problems immediately – confirm that a concentration of 0.3 mg/l of hydrogen cyanide is “*sofort tödlich*” (immediately fatal), a concentration of 0.2 mg/l being fatal within 5-10 minutes.<sup>52</sup> These concentrations correspond to about 0.2 and 0.3 g/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively.

Since the Auschwitz camp authorities were in touch with the Tesch & Stabenow company, which supplied the camp with Zyklon B for disinfection purposes, and because disinfestations were carried out in the camp by appropriately trained personnel, all data concerning the toxicological symptoms of hydrogen cyanide were readily available. Hence, there was no need to run tests in order to find out something that was extensively documented.

Furthermore, the results of those alleged experiments (and of alleged later tests in the mortuary of Crematorium I and in the so-called “Bunker 1”) are quite surprising. Concerning the amounts of Zyklon B normally used for the alleged homicidal gassings at the crematoria, Rudolf Höss declared:<sup>53</sup>

*“For gassing 1,500 to 1,700 persons, between 5 and 7 cans of 1 kg each were needed; the number of cans varied with the size of the gas chamber and the weather, that is to say, in cold and wet weather 2 or 3 extra cans were needed.”*

And again:<sup>54</sup>

*“For this [gassing of 1,500 to 1,600 persons] one needed – it varied with the crematoria, in the very large ones 7, in other rooms 5 cans. But it also depended on the weather. If it was very cold and wet, one had to take an extra 2-3 cans.”*

Hence, to gas 1,500 persons in Crematoria II and III (the “large crematoria”) at least seven cans of Zyklon B were needed, or 7 kg of hydrogen cy-

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 453. Cf. Document 1

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454. Cf. Document 2.

<sup>53</sup> Sworn statement by Höss dated May 17, 1946. NI-034.

<sup>54</sup> Sworn statement by Höss dated May 15, 1946. NI-036.



anide.<sup>55</sup> The alleged gas chamber of those crematoria – *Leichenkeller* (morgue) 1 – had a volume of 506 m<sup>3</sup>, from which we must deduct the volume of the 7 concrete columns (0.4×0.4×2.01m<sup>3</sup>),<sup>56</sup> which supported the central longitudinal beam of the ceiling, and this beam itself (0.4×0.4×30m<sup>3</sup>), or a total of 7 cubic meters. If we assume that the body of an average adult weighs some 75 kg and thus occupies some 75 liters of space, 1,500 persons occupy about 112 m<sup>3</sup>, leaving an effective volume of air of about 387 m<sup>3</sup>.

Hence, if 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide would have been poured into this alleged gas chamber, a theoretical concentration of about (7,000÷387=) 18 g/m<sup>3</sup>, or 18 mg/l, would have resulted. This is (18÷0.3=) 60 times higher than what is considered to be “immediately lethal.” In practice, however, the Zyklon B used at Auschwitz, using gypsum as a carrier material, released only some 5-10% of its hydrogen cyanide content within the first five to ten minutes after the can was opened.<sup>57</sup> Almost all witnesses who made statements about how long it took before all victims in the gas chambers were dead claimed that it took five to ten minutes or even considerably less than that.<sup>58</sup> Hence, if 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide were used, not more than some 0.7 kg of it could have evaporated from the carrier after the first ten minutes. This would have resulted in a concentration of toxic gas of (700÷387=) ca. 1.8 g/m<sup>3</sup>, or 1.8 mg/l, after ten minutes. The effective concentration for the entire ten minutes, however, would have been only half that amount, assuming a constant rise of the concentration from zero at the beginning.

Every single gassing would, therefore, have been a waste of (7-0.7=) 6.3 kg of Zyklon B in an attempt to cause the victims’ death within 5-10 minutes. Considering the economy of the alleged extermination, this would have been absolutely senseless and useless, because not the murder with gas, but the cremation of the resulting corpses would have been “the only ‘bottleneck’” of the attempted extermination, as R.J. van Pelt pointed out correctly.<sup>59</sup> As a matter of fact, employing merely 700 grams of Zyklon B

<sup>55</sup> The weight indicated on Zyklon B cans referred to the net HCN content.

<sup>56</sup> Height up to the base of the beam.

<sup>57</sup> Depending on the ambient temperature, see R. Irmischer, “Nochmals: ‘Die Einsatzfähigkeit der Blausäure bei tiefen Temperaturen’,” *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung*, 34 (1942), pp. 35f.

<sup>58</sup> See the large collection of such testimonies compiled by Germar Rudolf, Wolfgang Lambrecht, *The Rudolf Report*, 2nd ed., The Barnes Review, Washington, DC, 2011, p. 194, footnote 480.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 470; Cf. pp. 380, 455, 470. See below.

over a period of a couple of hours would have yielded the same theoretical concentration.

Considering the drastic efforts exerted in the German war economy to save material wherever possible,<sup>60</sup> the SS administration at Auschwitz would have used on average 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide at a cost of 35 Reichsmarks for one gassing, even though they could have achieved the same result with 0.7 kg at a cost of only 3.5 Reichsmarks.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, they would have considerably reduced the dangers during the removal of the corpses from the gas chamber.

There was, however, a way to quickly obtain high concentrations of hydrogen cyanide with Zyklon B: with the help of the well-known Degesch circulation system for disinfestation chambers.<sup>62</sup> This system had enormous advantages compared to traditional disinfestations: the Zyklon B can be placed in a receptacle inside the chamber and was opened from the outside. Its contents fell into a wire mesh basket, into which a fan blew warm air. The air inside the chamber was constantly moved around by this fan. This caused the swift release and dispersion of the toxic gas. The ventilation of such a gas chamber lasted only some 10-15 minutes.

As is well-known, 19 such delousing chambers using the Degesch circulation method had been planned since 1941 to be installed in the “laundry and reception building with delousing facility and inmate bath,” building no. 160. It appears in one of the first drawings of that structure, drawing no. 916 of December 30, 1941.<sup>63</sup> The Friedrich Boos company, which received the order to erect this building, compiled a cost estimate for it on September 12, 1942.<sup>64</sup>

In anticipation of this construction project and on the “initiative of the Friedrich Boos company,” the company Heerdt-Lingler had sent a copy of the article by Peters and Wüstinger on the Degesch circulation system<sup>62</sup> to

<sup>60</sup> The *Sonderbefehl* of December 21, 1942, concerned for example the exhortations of the head of the SS-WVHA “to save coal.” APMO, Kommandantur-Befehl, sygn. D-AuI,1, p. 106.

<sup>61</sup> The cost of Zyklon B in 1944 was 5 RM per kg. PS-1553, pp. 15-26.

<sup>62</sup> Gerhard Peters, Emil Wüstinger, “Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern. Sach-Entlausung in Blausäure-Kammern,” *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung*, 32 (10/11) (1940), pp. 191-196; Cf. also F.P. Berg, “The German Delousing Chambers,” *Journal of Historical Review*, 7(1) (1986), pp. 73-94.

<sup>63</sup> J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 47), p. 34.

<sup>64</sup> F. Boos, “Kostenanschlag V über die Einrichtung von 19 Stück Entlausungskammern für die Blausäure-Entlausungsanlage im K.L. Auschwitz.” RGVA, 502-1-137, pp. 13-16.

the then SS-*Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz as early as July 1, 1941, where it was received on July 3.<sup>65</sup> If it was governmental policy to implement mass extermination by means of Zyklon B, then why was the Degesch fumigation system not adopted? The responses of mainstream Holocaust historians to this question are absolutely inadequate.

Pressac claims that the above-mentioned article concerning disinfection chambers with the Degesch fumigation system was requested by the SS for the construction of the alleged “Bunker 2,” but the only feature allegedly adopted was the parallel arrangement of four small gas chambers “without mechanical ventilation,”<sup>66</sup> although the type of arrangement was absolutely irrelevant for the delousing system in question.

Regarding van Pelt’s explanation, who presumes to provide a broad, comprehensive answer to the above question, I refer to my already mentioned study.<sup>67</sup> Here it matters only that in van Pelt’s view, “in the case of the gas chambers it was the cremation process which invariably went considerably slower than the gassing.”<sup>68</sup> This brings us back to the starting point: if a short duration of the gassing procedure was not decisive because the cremation proceeded much more slowly, then why did the SS at Auschwitz take 7 kg of Zyklon B to obtain a gassing time of five to ten 10 minutes while wasting 90% of the toxic material?

Apart from safety and efficiency considerations, already this economic reason would have inevitably led the SS at Auschwitz to choose the Degesch fumigation system not just for disinfection purposes, but for the alleged mass extermination as well.

At the Irving-Lipstadt libel trial, the main objection to the *Leuchter Report*<sup>69</sup> was the ridiculous claim that<sup>70</sup>

*“the gas chambers were operated with a low (but lethal) hydrocyanide concentration of 100 ppm,”*

a concentration equivalent to 0.12 g/m<sup>3</sup>, or 0.12 mg/l, and thus (18÷0.12=) 150 times *lower* than the one ultimately resulting from R. Höss’s declarations!

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<sup>65</sup> RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 86-90.

<sup>66</sup> J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 41f.

<sup>67</sup> C. Mattogno, *The Real Case...*, *op. cit.* (note 23), Chapter. 6.2, “Why Not Use Degesch Gas Chambers for Homicides?,” pp. 185-188.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 380.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Fred A. Leuchter, Robert Faurisson, Germar Rudolf, *The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition*, 4th ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 388.

Therefore, the first claimed homicidal gassing did not serve to establish the lethal concentration of HCN for human beings, which was already known. As far as the time is concerned that it took for all victims to die, this claimed test would have been a grotesque failure, because it took two complete days for all of them to die! In spite of that, the SS of Auschwitz is said to have decided to use Zyklon B for homicidal purposes anyway, without even considering the option to use the Degesch fumigation system for their alleged machinery of mass murder!

In conclusion, it can be said that the first gassing has no relation to the alleged plan to exterminate Jews, to the execution of the Soviet political commissars, or to the testing of the toxicity of hydrogen cyanide.

Then what were the origin and the significance of the account of the first homicidal gassing?

As we shall see in Chapter III, the first reports by the secret resistance movement supply us with an answer to this question.





## Chapter II: The Setting of the First Gassing: Block 11

Before we examine the historical credibility of Danuta Czech's account, it is necessary to describe the layout and the other aspects of the buildings in which the first gassing is said to have occurred, in particular the basement of Block 11. This is necessary not only for a better understanding and a critical analysis of the testimonies which we will quote below, but also in order to ascertain the technical feasibility of the described gassing procedure. The present chapter thus constitutes an indispensable prerequisite for the critical evaluation of the sources to be discussed in Chapter IV.

Block 11 was located in the south-west corner of the Auschwitz concentration camp (cf. Documents 3f.). Initially it had been known as No. 13, but after the construction of eight new blocks in the years 1941 through 1943, the numbering was changed, and it came to be labeled No. 11, as it is now known (cf. Photo 1).

A publication of the Auschwitz National Museum describes it as follows:<sup>71</sup>

*“The block, known as No. 11 after the enlargement of the Auschwitz camp and the renumbering, differed from the other blocks externally by a permanently locked entrance door and a yard<sup>[72]</sup> that was separated from all other parts of the camp by high walls.<sup>[73]</sup> No detainee, other than those employed in Block 11, was allowed to enter or leave this block. As early as 1940, Block 11 housed a penal company, and its basement became the camp stockade, the so-called Bunker.<sup>[74]</sup> A steel door,<sup>[75]</sup> perma-*

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<sup>71</sup> Franciszek Brol, Gerard Włoch, Jan Pilecki, “Das Bunkerbuch des Blocks 11, im Nazi-Konzentrationslager Auschwitz,” *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, Vol. 1, 1959, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Photograph 2.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Photographs 3f.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Documents 5-8.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Photographs 9-11.

nently locked, led from the ground floor<sup>[76]</sup> into this cellar. The Bunker's left and right sides were separated by steel bars.<sup>[77]</sup> Cells 1 through 14 were on the left, cells 15 through 28 on the right.<sup>[78]</sup>

The cells were of the following kinds:

1) Cells with a window, which opened into a light-shaft on the outside.<sup>[79]</sup> They contained wooden bunks and buckets of galvanized steel. The cells destined for the SS had wooden floors, those for the detainees had a concrete floor.

2) Dark cells, without windows, having only air-holes<sup>[80]</sup> closed on the outside by means of metal grids. Their only furniture was a galvanized steel bucket. There were two such cells in the Bunker.

3) Stand-up cells that had been put into the normal cell No. 22.<sup>[81]</sup> They were the size of a telephone booth and could be entered into only from below through a small opening close to the floor."

An inspection of the site done by the Auschwitz National Museum, presumably in 1959, yielded the following information:<sup>82</sup>

"It was seen that the windows of cells 7, 9, 16, 18, 23, and 24 vary with respect to the windows of other cells and show traces of having been altered. Furthermore, iron bars protrude on the outside of the wall of cell 18; a basket covering the opening of the air-holes was attached to them. On drawing No. 1152 dated March 16, 1942, [Document 6] cells 7, 8, 9, and 10 are labeled 'dark cells.' There are 4 small stand-up cells in cell 22. No window openings are indicated for these cells in the drawing.

When comparing the result of the inspection with the present state of the basement of Block 11, it would appear justified to think that the number of dark cells varied and that this [designation] applied not only to the present cells 8 and 20, but also to cells 7 and 9 (drawing 1152) and to cell 18 (as shown by the protruding iron bars for the baskets, which existed only in dark cells and stand-up cells).

As far as the alterations to the windows of cells 23 and 24 are concerned (the windows have been walled up by a single layer of bricks with a crudely placed hole), it can no longer be ascertained whether this was done in connection with a transformation of these cells into dark cells."

From drawing No. 4056 dated June 26, 1944 (Document 7), one can take the following data: The basement of the block had a floor area of 45.10 by

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Photographs 5-8.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Photographs 12f.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Photographs 14-20.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Photographs 21-28.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Photographs 29-31.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Photograph 32.

<sup>82</sup> Franciszek Brol et al., *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 44.

13.84 meters. Cells 1-7, 9-20, and 23-28 had an almost identical floor area, which varied between a minimum of 8.41 m<sup>2</sup> (2.62×3.21 m<sup>2</sup>) and a maximum of 8.66 m<sup>2</sup> (2.70×3.21 m<sup>2</sup>). Cells 8, 21, and 22 had floor areas of 6.5, 6.0, and 12.3 m<sup>2</sup>, respectively. The total cell area was 238 m<sup>2</sup>. The central hallway had a floor area of 70.46 m<sup>2</sup> (36.70×1.92 m<sup>2</sup>). The total surface area of the two lateral corridors came to about 86 m<sup>2</sup>. The ceiling height of the basement was 2.18 meters.<sup>83</sup> Summarizing, the dimensions of the rooms mentioned were:

**Table 1:** Dimensions of the Bunker

Location	Floor area (approx.)	Volume (approx.)
Cells	238 m <sup>2</sup>	518 m <sup>3</sup>
Central hallway	70 m <sup>2</sup>	154 m <sup>3</sup>
Lateral corridors	86 m <sup>2</sup>	187 m <sup>3</sup>
Total	394 m <sup>2</sup>	859 m <sup>3</sup>

Cells 1-7, 9-13, 15-19, and 22-28 show windows closed by means of a steel grid in the upper part of the outside walls (cf. Photos 24 & 28), measuring 75 × 65 cm<sup>2</sup>, except for cells 7 and 9 (50×50 cm<sup>2</sup>) and 22 (32×42 cm<sup>2</sup>). Cell 20 has no window but an air-hole (10×10 cm<sup>2</sup>) covered by a metal grid, as in the stand-up cells.

Because the ground floor of the block is at a level higher than the street (6 steps are leading up to it), the Bunker is, in fact, only partly below ground, that is to say, its floor is some 150 cm below street level, whereas its ceiling is some 70 cm above it. The windows of the cells are therefore open to the outside, but walled by a brick structure some 90 cm high and having a base of about 50 cm × 140 cm (cf. Photos 21-23 & 26f.). Cell 21 has a window covered by a grid but no outside wall (cf. Photos 17 & 29). The doors of the cells measure 92 cm × 205 cm (cf. Photos 19f.).

In front of the entrance to the basement, on the wall opposite the central hallway, a sign in four languages states (cf. Photo 33):

*“In September 1941 first experimental mass killing of people with Cyclon B took place in this basement. 600 Soviet prisoners of war and 250 sick prisoners perished then.”*

<sup>83</sup> Measurements taken on site by the author.



## Chapter III: The Sources of the First-Gassing Accounts

### 1. Wartime Sources (1941 – 1943)

The story of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz was originally not placed into a plan for the mass extermination of Jews, but into a putative project involving the testing of combat gases on human beings within the framework of toxic chemicals used during WWI, as already mentioned. It was, in a way, the virtual continuation of such activities. This is mentioned in a number of reports from the Auschwitz camp resistance movement, the first one dating from October 24, 1941:<sup>84</sup>

*“At Oświęcim [Auschwitz], in early October, 850 Soviet officers and noncoms (POWs) that had been taken there were killed by gas as a test of a new type of combat gas, which is to be used on the eastern front.”*<sup>85</sup>

In the later sources the motive of testing of combat gases remains essentially unchanged, although there is some uncertainty with respect to the interpretation of the alleged event. In the “Report on the situation for the period of August 15 through November 15, 1941” dated November 15, 1941, one can read:<sup>86</sup>

*“The camp has been the scene of an abominable crime when during the night of September 5-6 some 600 Soviet inmates, ‘Politruks’ of the army, and about 200 Poles were herded into the Bunker<sup>[87]</sup> and, when the Bunker had been hermetically sealed, were poisoned with a gas and their corpses taken to the crematorium and burned.”*

On November 17, 1941, the clandestine newsletter *Informacja bieżąca* (Current News), No. 21, carried the story with some more details:<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Obóz koncentracyjny Oświęcim w świetle akt Delegatury Rządu R.P. na Kraj” (The Auschwitz concentration camp in light of the documents of the Polish government in exile), *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, special edition no. I, Oświęcim 1968, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> “jako próbę nowego typu gazu bojowego, który ma być użyty na froncie wschodnim”

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>87</sup> “do bunkra”



*“Oświęcim. The news of the nefarious crime committed in the camp has been confirmed. During the night of September 5-6, 1941, some 600 Soviet civilian prisoners of war that had been taken there were herded into the Bunker at Oświęcim<sup>[88]</sup> with their arms and legs broken. Added to them were some 250 Poles. The openings of the Bunker were hermetically closed, and the inmates shut in were poisoned with gases.<sup>[89]</sup> The corpses of the poisoned detainees were moved during the night on 80 carts to the crematorium, where they were cremated.”*

The “Attachment to annex No. 21 for the period of December 1st through 15, 1941” echoes the first version of the note:<sup>90</sup>

*“In the concrete shelter<sup>[91]</sup> 500 POWs have been poisoned by means of a combat gas.”<sup>92</sup>*

This is repeated a few months later in a report produced by a Czech teacher who escaped from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in May of 1942:<sup>93</sup>

*“The worst reputation is enjoyed by the concentration camp at Oswiecim near Krakow. Not only are the victims of German cruelty tortured and mis-handled in the usual German fashion, but the efficacy of German poison gases is even tried on them and other experiments are made with them.”*

On July 1, 1942, the *Polish Fortnightly Review* published a more detailed account of the first homicidal gassing with additions and quite material variations with respect to the report of October 24, 1941, but still in line with the account in hand at the time:<sup>94</sup>

*“Among the other experiments being tried on the prisoners is the use of poison gas. It is generally known that during the night of September 5th to 6th last year about a thousand people were driven down to the underground shelter in Oswiecim, among them seven hundred Bolshevik prisoners of war and three hundred Poles. As the shelter was too small to hold this large number, the living bodies were simply forced in, regardless of broken bones. When the shelter was full, gas was injected into it, and the prisoners died during the night. All night the rest of the camp was kept awake by the groans and howls coming from the shelter. Next day other prisoners had to carry out the bodies, a task which took all day. One hand-*

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<sup>88</sup> “w bunkra w Oświęcimiu”

<sup>89</sup> “gazami”

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>91</sup> “w betownym schronie”

<sup>92</sup> “za pomocą gazu bojowego”

<sup>93</sup> FO, 371/30837 5365, “Conditions in Czechoslovakia,” pp. 157f.

<sup>94</sup> *Polish Fortnightly Review*, London, No. 47, July 1, 1942, p. 2.

*cart on which the bodies were being removed broke down under the weight."*

In the last reports of 1942, the motive of the testing of combat gases is joined by the alleged mass killing of Soviet prisoners of war. The "Report on the situation in the country for the period of August 25 through October 10, 1942," dated October 10, 1942, stated in this regard:<sup>95</sup>

*"From July 1941 on, Bolshevik POWs were brought to the camp where almost all of them, several tens of thousands, have been poisoned in gas chambers."*

And the *Informacja bieżąca* No. 39 of October 23, 1942, wrote:<sup>96</sup>

*"[...] and finally Russian POWs; in 1941, some 60,000 arrived and none survived: on them, the effect of combat gases was tested."*<sup>97</sup>

It is worthwhile to note that the accepted number of Soviet prisoners of war brought to Auschwitz amounts to 11,964 persons.<sup>98</sup> During his first interrogation at the hands of his British captors, Rudolf Höss took up this item of Polish propaganda and "confessed"<sup>99</sup>:

*"I personally remember to have gassed 70,000 Russian POWs during my tour of duty as commandant of Auschwitz, ordered to do so by the respective Gestapo chiefs."* (sic)

The story of the testing of combat gases, but without a specific reference to Auschwitz, is echoed in France towards the end of 1942, with suitable adjustments. In its edition of October 10, 1942, *J'accuse* wrote the following:<sup>100</sup>

*"The news which is reaching us in spite of the silence of the official press has it that the tens of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children deported from France have either been burned alive in sealed [railroad] cars or asphyxiated to test a new type of toxic gas."*

A flyer of the French Communist Party repeats the news in the following terms:<sup>101</sup>

*"And in order to test the toxicity of the gases they produce in their chemical laboratories, the Germans have committed a terrible crime, which*

<sup>95</sup> "Obóz koncentracyjny Oświęcim...", *op. cit.* (note 84), pp. 45f.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>97</sup> "próbowano na nich działania gazów bojowych"

<sup>98</sup> F. Piper, *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz*, Verlag Staatliches Museum in Oświęcim, 1993, p. 102.

<sup>99</sup> Declaration by R. Höss, dated March 14, 1946, NO-1210.

<sup>100</sup> Stéphane Courtois, Adam Rayski, *Qui savait quoi? L'extermination des Juifs 1941-1945*, Editions La Découverte, Paris 1987, p. 155.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

*causes indignation among all decent people. We have in fact learned from a reliable source that out of the Jews deported from the occupied zone and out of those, whom Laval and Pétain have handed over to them from the non-occupied zone, the Germans have selected 11,000 men, women, old people, and children and have tested on them poison gases. These unfortunate people have all died a horrible death."*

In the special edition of February 1943, *J'accuse* returns to the question and states:<sup>102</sup>

*"Thus we have learned that 11,000 of them [French Jews deported to the east] have been used as guinea-pigs for the testing of a poisonous gas which the Nazis intend to use."*

As late as September 1945, the witness Werner Krumme, an ex-detainee at Auschwitz, ID 99166, declared:<sup>103</sup>

*"Above the ground level the buildings had small windows, through which the SS guards then threw a substance, developing into poisonous gas. It was here where the Nazis tried out all kinds of new poisonous gasses, which they needed for their war effort."*

In August of 1943, a pamphlet in Polish, written by Natalia Zarembina, was published in London under the title *Obóz śmierci*. It contains a section on the first gassing.<sup>104</sup> It is not clear whether the author is a former detainee, since the pamphlet is not written in the way of a personal account. The style is more narrative, as in a novel, and the author is an omnipresent detached observer. An English version appeared in 1944, titled *The Camp of the Death*, from which the following passage was taken:<sup>105</sup>

*"In the corner of the rectangle, where the camp's buildings are situated, there are the barracks for penal detention. They hardly differ from the other blocks in this row. They are built in the same style as the old barracks which were in use during the Austrian régime, where they housed the Royal Imperial artillery, and the new ones, built by the prisoners, for the ever-increasing number of new companions, arriving from the world outside. They are all the same dull shape and of the same dreary red brick. The ones for penal detention are twin-barracks, consisting of two blocks, connected with each other. That is the first variation from the rest of the*

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>103</sup> Declaration by Werner Krumme dated "Glenn, August 1945." NO-1933, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> Natalia Zarembina, *Obóz śmierci. Zbiór relacji z obozu w Oświęcimiu opublikowanych w kraju przez ruch mas pracujących Polski* (The camp of death. Collection of accounts published in the Country by the resistance movement of the working masses of Poland), Nakładem "Nowej Polski," London, August 1943.

<sup>105</sup> Natalia Zarembina, *The Camp of Death*. Liberty Publications, London 1944, S. 22f.

*camp's design. The second is the number of small windows at the bottom. They look sinister and secretive, those little windows – and no wonder, because behind them are the dark vaults from which no one has ever returned. To-day it is unusually lively in the neighbouring barrack. Removal. The whole detachment, about 300 people, are[sic] being transferred to the next block, built recently. Into the empty building they are going to bring the seriously ill from the hospital.*

*'They must be enlarging it,' one prisoner supposes. 'High time, too; it was incredibly cramped.'*

*The activity around the barracks for penal detention does not stop even when night falls. The gravel grinds the steps of many people; their sound echoes [in] the stairs and gets lost in the vaults.*

*A new batch of prisoners is arriving: 500 Bolsheviks. Who is it, who is not yet included with the Polish nucleus? There are already Czechs, Germans, Jews, and Serbs, and now they have brought in those Russians. But why are they going to be housed with the seriously ill? They cannot be ill – they came marching into the camp.*

*The prisoners in the nearby barracks don't even attempt to sleep; they listen to what is going on in the next house that has been emptied so hurriedly and refilled again.*

*A short interval separates the noise of the steps on the gravel from the inhuman screams that follow, penetrating through every crack of the windows. The dominating note in these screams is that of a shock, but the prisoners' ears, experienced in listening, are able to discern precisely the notes of pain, cries for help, and the final despair. Several times this 'tune' is repeated: first the rhythm of the steps, and then the chords of the screams. And then there is silence. The silence of the grave. It creeps sinisterly around the twin-barracks. The next day, these barracks, now silent, give the impression of a tombstone over a huge grave.*

*For three days the stillness around the barracks for penal detention remains undisturbed. The fourth night lifts the veil of secrecy. The gravel grinds again, this time under the wheels of carts that drive up in front of the barracks. Another removal – but not of people, only of objects. Clothes which a few days ago had been worn by the sick Poles brought in from hospital, and others that had belonged to the Russians – they will all, the Russian army uniforms and the camp's drill overalls, find their way to the storeroom blocks.*

*After some time, the carts carry other loads and roll off in the opposite direction. Naked human bodies are piled up high. The carts move towards the crematorium.*

*Five minutes are sufficient to cover the distance between the corner barracks and the green, turf-covered hill of the crematorium. Even the prisoners, through pushing the carts, heavily loaded with the corpses, do not need*

*much more time; they are in a hurry to get rid of their ghastly load. But their work will not be finished very soon, for the twin-barracks continuously supply them with fresh loads. For several nights the men will have to push the heavy carts from the camp to crematorium and back. During the day there is deadly silence around the barracks for penal detention, but at night the turning wheels speak of the secret of the vaults.*

*The naked bodies, thrown in disorderly fashion along and across the carts, take their ride. The pale moonlight is their only shroud. In this light their dead faces look even more dead and the pallor of their limbs is intensified. The men to the carts are not driven on by anybody, but they quicken their steps by their own impulse. One cart, unevenly loaded and clumsily handled, sways and turns over. For a moment the corpses seem to come to life once more; they jump one over the other, roll down the road, wave their hands, turn on their sides, and then again lie motionless, their faces turned skywards or towards the ground.*

*The moon in the west throws a feeble light on the scene; it is already mingled with the light of the dawn, but the greenish tinge on the dead bodies does not disappear: it seems rather to become more distinct now in the new light of day.*

*One of the grave-diggers, holding a corpse in his arms to throw it back on the cart, gazes into the greenish-grey face for a while. Years ago he saw similar faces: a deserted trench with corpses of soldiers. The same ghostly pallor. It is the discolouration of poison gas.*

*The secret of the vaults, from which nobody ever returned, filters through with the dawn of a new day. The secret of 800 people killed is revealed.*

*To the short 'tune,' beginning with the steps on the gravel, the words are found. They killed them with gas."*

The essential merit of this account is to have indicated Block 11 as being the place of the alleged event. Previously, it had taken place in an undefined "Bunker" or "concrete shelter." But it also contains several obvious mistakes. First of all, the punishment cells existed only in Block 11, whereas N. Zarembina's account also places them in Block 10, which was next to it. As a matter of fact, Block 11 did not differ from all the other blocks of the camp by "the number of small windows at the bottom" – they were all built that way. The 300 sick inmates who were "transferred to the next block," *i.e.* Block 11, did not come from the block next door. The nearest hospital block was No. 21, which was across from Block 12. Moreover, if we follow the official texts, many detainees came from Block 28, which was situated in a different part of the camp, near the northern corner. Finally, the description of the corpses is proof that the story is completely invented:



*“Years ago he saw similar faces: a deserted trench with corpses of soldiers. The same ghostly pallor. It is the discolouration of poison gas.”*

During the First World War, both sides employed aggressive chemicals of various types.<sup>106</sup> Each one had a different way of action, and only a naive and uninformed novelist could describe them all as having one identical effect: the “ghostly pallor” and the “discolouration.” Actually, as we shall see in Chapter IV.6.5., the effect on skin color of a poisoning by hydrogen cyanide is completely different. All this is not surprising: Natalia Zarembina did not know that the alleged first gassing would be said to involve Zyklon B. As we shall see in the following chapter, that was decided on only after the war. Therefore Zarembina’s Polish text uses the term “gazami,”<sup>107</sup> in the plural, embracing in this way both the toxic chemicals of WWI and the story of the testing of poison gases on the detainees.

## 2. Post-War Sources

In February and March of 1945, the Soviet commission of investigation at Auschwitz questioned, among many others, also the former detainee Zbigniew Baranowskij,<sup>108</sup> who declared:<sup>109</sup>

*“On August 15, 1941, 400 Soviet prisoners of war were brought in before my eyes and taken into the prison at Block 11. The same day, 1000 inmates from the [camp] hospital who had tuberculosis were also taken there. All of them – the POWs and the sick – were asphyxiated with gases.”*

On May 8, 1945, at Buchenwald, the Czech national Josef Vacek, a former detainee at Auschwitz with ID 15514, declared:<sup>110</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Halogens, derivatives of carbon oxide, hydrogen cyanide and its derivatives, formic acid derivatives, acetic acid derivatives, acetone derivatives, sulfuric acid ethers, nitromethane derivatives, aliphatic arsines, glycol derivatives, glycerol derivatives, toluene derivatives, aromatic arsines, heterocyclic compounds; see Attilio Izzo, *op. cit.* (note 24), “Principali aggressivi chimici” (Principal aggressive chemicals), table outside of text.

<sup>107</sup> Natalia Zarembina, “Obóz śmierci...,” *op. cit.* (note 104), p. 18.

<sup>108</sup> The name is transliterated from Russian. A Zbigniew Baranowski had the registration number 20904 (Franciszek Piper, Irena Strzelecka (eds.), *Księga pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Radomia i innych miejscowości Kielecczyny, 1940-1944*, Towarzystwo Opieki nad Oświęcimiem, Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 2006, Vol. 1, p. 336, 349), hence he had been deported to Auschwitz on September 15, 1941 (D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 22), pp. 121f.). If this is not a homophone, Zbigniew Baranowski or Baranowskij was a false witness.

<sup>109</sup> “Conclusion of the investigation into the misdeeds of the Germano-Fascists in the concentration camp of Auschwitz/Oświęcim” by military deputy prosecutor Machimow, March 19, 1945. GARF, 7021-108, pp. 29f.

*“In early September, Soviet prisoners of war were brought into the camp, more than 500 of them. In addition to those, SS-surgeon Jungen selected 196 sick inmates, and they were gassed together with the Russian POWs in the gas chamber of Block 11. We paramedics who accompanied them there were told that this was only a temporary housing measure until they would depart with a [certain] train. The following night, when everyone was asleep and nobody was allowed to leave the block, I was called up together with other 30 paramedics, and for three nights in a row we took the gassed corpses to the crematorium.”*

On May 17, 1945, Walter Petzold, a German ex-detainee at Auschwitz (ID 10212), drew up a six-page report at Mauthausen titled *“Bericht über die erste Vergasung von Gefangenen in deutschen Konzentrationslagern”* (Report about the first gassing of prisoners in German concentration camps), in which he claimed to be the only witness of the first gassing. We quote the essential sections:<sup>111</sup>

*“The foundations for the first gassing of inmates carried out in German concentration camps were laid in concentration camp Auschwitz in July of 1941 during a general disinfection implemented with Cyklon ‘B,’ a blue gas supplied by the Hamburg firm of Tesch & Stapenow [sic]. This firm delegated a number of specialists, because the application of this poison required official clearance, and those involved had to possess an official poison license. The rules were such that the rooms to be disinfected had to be air-tight. The duration had to be at least 72 hours; even after the 48-hour ventilation period they could only be entered with a gas mask.*

*The experience gained during this large-scale disinfection at Auschwitz formed the basis for the start of the industrialized murders that were implemented later that year in all German concentration camps. In the early stages of this general disinfection, SS commands were acquainted with the poison substance to be used and trained by the employees of the supplier. The experience gained in this way would be put to use for the first time with the extermination of people on October 9, 1941.*

*As early as 3 days before the planned extermination of people, a general unrest spread through the camp on account of the permanent threat of death, caused by the removal of all prisoners in the camp prison, located in Block 11, but no one knew what was to come. A clarification of this uncertainty occurred only a day later, on October 7, 1941, when a commando of detainees was formed and given the task of placing shutters on all windows*

<sup>110</sup> Eberhard Jäckel, Jürgen Rohwer (ed.), *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1985, p. 167.

<sup>111</sup> Staatsanwaltschaft beim LG Frankfurt (Main), Strafsache beim Schwurgericht Frankfurt (Main) gegen Baer und Andere wegen Mordes, ref. 4 Js 444/59, Vol. 31, pp. 5309-5314.

of Block 11, making them gas-tight and taping them. In the morning of October 9, 1941, the paramedics of the inmate hospital received the order to take some 220 sick persons to Block 11, who were listed in a paper put together by the political department of the Auschwitz concentration camp; they were to wear only trousers and a shirt.

Among the patients moved in this way the rumor was spread that in the future Block 11, too, was to be used as a back-up hospital. The move had to be finished within two hours. In the afternoon, a few more selected detainees from the camp were taken to the Bunker. The death candidates were mainly detainees from intellectual circles, made up by all nations then present at Auschwitz, predominantly Poles.

At roll-call that same day, strict curfew was ordered for all detainees without exception from 20:00 hours, i.e. no detainee was allowed to leave his quarters after 20:00 hours. Apparently the aim was [for the SS] to stay among themselves, because it was the first test of this kind of extermination of people; depending on how things would go, it would be kept secret. This strict curfew prohibiting the detainees from leaving their quarters obviously increased the curiosity of the inmates to an unbearable extent. No one in the camp, except this author, had a precise knowledge of what was in store. I had gained this knowledge by having secretly witnessed a conversation between my boss at the time, SS-Unterscharführer Breitwieser, who was to carry out this first gassing and who had the necessary qualification, and the head of the political department, SS-Unterscharführer Grabner. This conversation took place in the room next to the one in which I worked, and I was able to overhear it, because the walls were made up of sanded glass. The gist of the conversation was that at night, around 21:00 hours, some 1,000 Russian prisoners of war were to arrive who would all be housed in the Bunker of Block 11 and gassed.

Furthermore, the conversation stated that all preparations for the annihilation of the unfortunate victims were finished and the gas to be used was available in the amount needed; when all prisoners would be lodged in the Bunker [the gas] would be thrown in through specially placed window flaps. After introduction, only the connecting doors would have to be made air-tight in order to prevent the gas from escaping.

To give more precise information, the space available for the gassing has to be described in more detail. Block 11 had a total length of about 45 meters and a width of 15 meters. In the basement, where the gassing was to be accomplished, there were 28 cells of normal size, some 3.50 by 2.00 meters. There were also some stand-up cells, an invention of the then commander of Auschwitz, SS-Hauptsturmführer Fritsch [sic]. If the walls of those cells could speak, they would relate the story of the most cruel and most horrifying crime committed by the SS regime in power at that time.

*Those 28 normal cells would see 1,078 dead inmates during the night of October 9 to 10, 1941. Around 21 hours on October 9, 1941, the first detachment of these unfortunate POWs was led through the gate of the Auschwitz concentration camp. All available SS noncoms who were on duty at the camp stood ready to receive this sad cortège. As soon as the first Russian prisoner came through the gate, there was a wild melee, which soon took on the character of a terrible orgy. Anyone available hit, stabbed, and slashed the prisoners, who were led on the double across the roll-call square to the Bunker. I can still hear the sonorous voice of one of the prisoners in the first group, who supported a sick buddy and called out to him 'keep running, the German hits.'*

*I must add the remark that I was able to observe all those events from a well-chosen and safe hide-out. Under terrible beatings the 850 prisoners were herded into the Bunker. By the time they had all been pushed in, 35 minutes had elapsed. By now, if we add the 220 patients from the hospital and the 8 inmates, 1,078 persons had been pressed into the narrow space of those 28 cells; even without any gas they would soon have died in those sealed rooms from suffocation. Once all preparations had been finished, gassing was implemented through the window lids already mentioned.*

*The gas containers were emptied by SS-Unterscharführer Artur Breitwieser, born August 10, 1910, latest place of residence at Litzmannstadt, as well as by a second SS-Unterscharführer, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten. Also present was the whole team running the Auschwitz camp with SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höss at its head, Hauptsturmführer Fritzsch, Untersturmführer Grabner, and SS-Hauptscharführer Palitzsch, who all presented this cruel mass murder to other SS leaders as the latest achievement of German culture. When the cans had been emptied and the flaps and steel doors closed, the fate of 1,078 representatives of nearly all countries in Europe, among them 850 Russian POWs, was sealed, and they were dying a terrible death.*

*That was the beginning of a gigantic genocide which, according to my private notes that I was able to keep because of my position at Auschwitz, reached the enormous, almost unbelievable figure of at least 3.2 million people. Once their evil deed was done, the executioners drove off in their cars and celebrated this victory in the officers' mess in their own way.*

*Because of a lack of experience, the procedure at that time followed strictly the rules laid down by the supplier of Cyklon B. The corpses were left in the cellar of Block 11 for 72 hours, removal from the cellar started after 2 days of ventilation. For the removal during the sixth night after this crime, 30 inmate paramedics from the sickbay were brought in, whose task was to take the corpses out of the cellar and move them by cart to the crematorium. Prior to that, two SS dentists had to examine all corpses and break out any gold teeth. Later, with increasing routine, this practice was entrusted*



*to 4 dentists specially delegated from the main sanitation office in Berlin, having the ranks of Unter- and Obersturmführer, to supervise and organize this desecration on a grand scale.*

*At that time, there was only one crematorium at Auschwitz, which was completely inadequate for this kind of mass cremation. For the first gassing, they had made the fatal mistake of gassing the prisoners with their clothes on so that it became necessary to undress the corpses in the prison yard, because they could not have been burned fully clothed and because the crematorium was already overtaxed by the continuous executions.*

*Also, the effect of blue gas on the human body was as yet not so well known as was the case later on, when enough experience had been acquired. Before the corpses would be burned, 72 hours had passed for the gassing and another 48 hours for the ventilation. I have had the opportunity to observe the corpses in the prison yard at such a moment. I shall never forget the sight. The nature of the corpses, on account of the terrible effect of the poison gas, was such that one could see only blue-black, bloated, and mushy flesh that had once belonged to human beings. Cyklon 'B' has the property of disintegrating a human body almost completely, of causing the human lung to burst and of turning the rest of the body into a jelly-like state. Only a person who has been present can imagine the sort of effort required to bring the corpses up from the cellar and take their clothes off [...].*

*Cremation of the corpses of the first murder by gas on October 9 at Auschwitz took three days and three nights, because of the low capacity of the crematorium then in use and the circumstances described."*

The basic thesis of this report – that the first major disinfestation of the camp with Zyklon B had been the precondition for the first homicidal gassing – has no basis in fact, as we have already seen in Chapter I. It is also at variance with Rudolf Höss's account, because otherwise Eichmann's laborious search for a gas suitable for the extermination would have made no sense. The witness furthermore states that the Auschwitz commander himself was present at the first gassing, whereas Höss claims that Fritzsche ran the experiment while he himself was away. Absolutely unfounded, finally, is what the witness has to say with respect to the application of the official guidelines for disinfestations. The "*Richtlinien für die Anwendung von Blausäure (Zyklon) zur Ungeziefervertilgung (Entwesung)*"<sup>112</sup> (Guidelines for the application of hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon) against pests (disinfestation)), published by the Institute for Sanitation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, specified an *Einwirkungszeit* (application time) of up

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<sup>112</sup> NI-9912.



to 32 hours in the most adverse cases and a *Lüftung* (ventilation) of *at least 20 hours*.

However, as I have explained in Chapter I, contrary to what the witness asserts, the lethal concentration of hydrogen cyanide for human beings was well known at the time, so that the alleged duration of 72 hours for the gas-sing is decidedly absurd. Moreover, the term “blue gas” (*Blaugas*) used by him is an old German term for “a gas for heating and lighting named after its inventor [Mr.] Blau.”<sup>113</sup>

It is certainly true that the terms “*Blaugas-Entwesungsanlage*” (blue gas disinfection plant) and “*Blaugaskammer*” (blue gas chamber) can be found in a document,<sup>114</sup> where the term in question is a contraction of “*Blausäuregas*,” (blue acid gas = hydrogen cyanide gas), which is a rather unusual use of language, but the witness, as we shall see in Chapter 6, had in mind neither the one nor the other definition. He simply committed a propaganda blunder.

The “blue-black” discoloration of the corpses, too, is in disagreement with hydrogen cyanide poisoning. The alleged capability of this substance “of disintegrating a human body almost completely,” on the other hand, is pure fantasy. The alleged duration of the cremation of the 1,078 corpses – three days and three nights – is technically impossible, because at that time the crematorium of the Main Camp possessed only two ovens of two muffle-fles each,<sup>115</sup> which could theoretically incinerate 96 corpses in 24 hours at most. The cremation of the alleged victims would therefore have taken more than eleven days. Finally, the statement regarding the total number of victims at Auschwitz – 3,200,000 – furnishes us with yet another element by which to measure the credibility of the witness.

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<sup>113</sup> In 1904/05, German chemist Hermann Blau produced a gas by thermic decomposition of petrol, which could easily be liquefied and thus stored and transported. It consists mainly of propane and butane. The English term for it is “liquefied petroleum gas”; Cf. Otto Lenz, Ludwig Gaßner, *Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen*, issue no. 1: “*Blausäure*.” Verlagsbuchhandlung von Richard Schoetz, Berlin 1934, p. 15. It is possible that the term is an abbreviation for “*Blausäuregas*” (blue acid gas), but it more likely reflects the naïve belief of many inmates that Zyklon B consisted of “blue crystals,” developed a “blue gas,” and resulted in patchy blue corpses of persons poisoned by it. See Chapter IV.6.5.

<sup>114</sup> “Aufstellung über die im KL. und KGL. Auschwitz eingebauten Entwesungsanlagen, Bäder und Desinfektionsapparate,” written by the civilian employee Jährling on July 30, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 9f.

<sup>115</sup> The *SS-Bauleitung* at Auschwitz confirmed to the Topf Co. the order for the third double-muffle oven on October 3, 1941. RGVA, 502-2-23, p. 269.

In 1946, the investigating judge Jan Sehn published a report on his inquiry into the Auschwitz camp, which contains the passage quoted in Chapter I. The report became the basis for the indictment in the trial against Rudolf Höss (February 11, 1947), and the passage in question appears *verbatim* in the indictment.<sup>116</sup> This text also became part of the verdict of that trial (April 2, 1947), with only the opening words being changed:<sup>117</sup>

*“Basing themselves on the principle that the use of poison gas was the most efficient means for mass extermination of persons from other races, like Jews and Gypsies, or of other nationalities, like Poles and Czechs, the Germans tested this method of murder for the first time in the summer of 1941 in the Bunkers of Block No. XI.”*

A few months later, the indictment in the trial against the camp garrison of Auschwitz (November 25 through December 16, 1947) dealt with this alleged event in two lines, but with a change of the date from summer to autumn:<sup>118</sup>

*“The first gassing tests were run in the autumn of 1941 in the Bunkers of Block 11 on some 600 prisoners of war and 250 sick persons.”*

During the preparation of the trial against Höss and during the procedures in court (March 11-29, 1947), various persons testified on the subject of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz. On June 11, 1945, Michał Kula – deported to Auschwitz on August 14, 1940, and registered under the ID 2718 – was questioned by Jan Sehn and declared:<sup>119</sup>

*“According to my information, the first gassing took place during the night of 14-15 and the day of 15 of August 1941 in the Bunkers of Block 11. I remember that very clearly because it coincided with the first anniversary of my arrival at the camp and because the first Russian prisoners of war were then gassed. In the evening of August 14 the paramedics took 250 sick inmates from the hospital blocks to Block 11. Then, into that block were herded several hundred Russian prisoners who – as we were told when they arrived at the camp – were political commissars. Both the sick inmates and the Russian POWs were lodged in the Bunker of Block 11.*

*The little windows of those Bunkers were covered with fine earth to make them air-tight. An SS man, a Blockführer, whose name I do not know but who was called ‘Tom Mix’ by the detainees threw the gas into the Bunkers*

<sup>116</sup> AGK, NTN, 104, Höss trial, Vol. 22, p. 84.

<sup>117</sup> AGK, NTN, 114a, Höss trial, Vol. 31, p. 41.

<sup>118</sup> GARF, 7021-108-39, p. 37.

<sup>119</sup> Deposition of Michał Kula, June 11, 1945. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-Hd/2, Höss trial, Vol. 2, pp. 97f.

*through the door to the corridor. After that, the door was closed. On August 15, around 4 p.m., Palitzsch walked across the roll-call yard directly to Block 11 with a gas mask. Because it was the Feast of the Assumption, we had the afternoon off and could thus observe the scene which I will now describe. Mietek Borek and Waclav Ruski, two assistants at Bunker 11, told me that Palitzsch put on his gas mask, opened the door of the Bunkers, and discovered that the people inside were still alive.*

*Actually, they moved around only on all fours and were very weak, but they were still alive. So, Tom Mix was called and he threw in the contents of another can of gas. The Bunkers were reopened only in the evening of August 16, 1941. None of those who had entered were still alive. The paramedics from the hospital blocks took the gassed into the yard where they were undressed, loaded on carts, and taken away in the direction of Brzezinka [Birkenau].*

*I spent the night in Block 21, in the practice of the dentist Janusz Kulczbara. From there, I was able to observe the transportation of the corpses very well. The cart broke down below the window of the practice, the corpses fell on the ground, and I then saw that they had a greenish color.*

*The paramedics told me that the corpses were gluey and that the skin came off, in many cases they had chewed-up fingers and mangled throats. From that it is obvious that these people had died a horrible death. The succeeding gassings already took place in the [mortuary] chamber of Crematorium I. The man in charge of the gassings in that crematorium was Hössler. [...] The corpses of the sick inmates and of the Russians gassed in August of 1941 in the Bunkers of Block 11, as I have already stated, were not cremated in the crematorium but taken away towards Brzezinka where they were buried.”*

The declarations of the witness on the subject of the first gassing were the specific topic of another interrogation, also dated June 11, 1945, which is, however, a mere extract of the declaration cited above.<sup>120</sup>

On March 15, 1947, Kula declared the following before the tribunal:<sup>121</sup>

*“In 1941 the shootings, the executions began. In July of 1941, at 5:30 in the morning, Russian prisoners of war arrived. They were assembled in front of the kitchen, 50 of them were killed behind the kitchen; the 60 who remained alive were taken to Block 11 on Saturday. That is where the first gassing took place. Also lodged in Block 11 were 260 patients from the hospital; the paramedics had taken them there on Saturday night – after*

<sup>120</sup> Deposition of Michał Kula, June 11, 1945. AGK, NTN, 93, Höss trial, Vol. 11, pp. 98-101.

<sup>121</sup> AGK, NTN, 107, Höss trial, Vol. 25, pp. 480f.

*removing their bandages, most of them had abscesses – and put them in with the others in the basement.*

*On Sunday, in the afternoon, when all the detainees were free from work and were thus sitting on the ground exposing their bones and their wounds to the sun, section leader Palitzsch walked across the roll-call yard towards Bunker 11 with a gas mask. Another SS man was with him, tall and blond, whom the detainees called ‘the strangler.’ A few minutes later they came back quickly carrying with them two cans. The cans were larger than [the case of] the gas mask, of the same color. With the two cans they ran towards Block 11. The detainees were pulled out of that block and shut up in the gas chamber. The gas chamber was opened on Monday. As some people were still alive, they were gassed again. The paramedics took the corpses to Brzezinka to be buried, because the crematorium could not handle the cremation.”*

This testimony contains a number of contradictions with respect to the deposition made two years earlier. First of all, the event takes place in July of 1941, rather than on August 14, and in the afternoon rather than in the evening. The day of the week, a Sunday, is furthermore in disagreement with the date of August 14, 1941, which was a Thursday. The victims, who were originally 250 patients and “several hundred Russian prisoners,” have become 260 patients and 60 Russian prisoners. Palitzsch’s assistant whom the detainees used to call “Tom Mix” has now become “the strangler.” Very significant is the use by the witness of the expression “gas chamber” to designate the basement of Block 11, which was subdivided into multiple cells and a corridor.

A few months later, at the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison, M. Kula tells his story again, still placing it in July of 1941 (“w lipcu 1941”), but this time there are 200 patients:<sup>122</sup>

*“Instead, 200 detainees were selected from the sickbay blocks, their bandages were removed and they were taken to Block 11, i.e. into the Bunker. The remaining Russians were also taken there and they were all gassed together. This was the first test gassing at Auschwitz.”*

The witness Jan Krokowski made his deposition on July 17, 1946:<sup>123</sup>

*“I was an eyewitness one night in the autumn of 1941 when near Block 24, in which I was housed at the time, several hundred Russian inmates were herded towards Block 11. That they were Russians I could gather from the Russian words they uttered while they were pushed and beaten by the SS. The following day, I learned that 600 Russian POWs and 400 sick Poles*

<sup>122</sup> AGK, NTN, 162, camp garrison trial, pp. 45f.

<sup>123</sup> Deposition of Jan Krokowski. APMO, Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4, p. 21.

*had been gassed the night before in the basement of Block 11; at first they had used too little gas, and many were still alive when the chamber was opened, so that the dose was increased, and they were all killed in this way. As far as I know, that was the only gassing in Block 11."*

The deposition by Józef Koczorowski, given on September 6, 1946, is even more laconic:<sup>124</sup>

*"I wish to state that the first gassing at Auschwitz occurred in the cellars of Block 11. I think it was in October of 1941. At that time, some 600 Russian prisoners of war and about 200 Tbc-patients from the sickbay were gassed."*

On September 7, 1946, the witness Ludwik Rajewski, deported to Auschwitz on September 22, 1940, (ID 4217) declared somewhat laconically, when speaking of the Russian prisoners deported to Auschwitz:<sup>125</sup>

*"They came to Auschwitz in the autumn of 1941 and were killed there over a period of some five months in late 1941 and early 1942. The first lot were killed over three days in the gravel pit<sup>[126]</sup> near the Blockführerstube (block elders room) of the Main Camp. Another 600 were gassed in October of 1941 in the basements of Block 11."*

The witness Roman Taul, deported to Auschwitz on June 24, 1940 (ID 1108), stated on September 10, 1946:<sup>127</sup>

*"I remember that later in 1941, in August I think, Grabner told his staff after a meeting with Höss that a transport of Soviet commissars had arrived which would have to be gassed. That was the first action of this kind on the grounds of Auschwitz; in conformity with this announcement they were led into the basement of Block 11. At that time, several hundred patients selected for this purpose at the camp sickbay were gassed as well besides this group of Russians. In his capacity as camp surgeon, Dr. Schwela was in charge of the event."*

The witness Feliks Myłyk, who was deported to Auschwitz on June 14, 1940, and who worked in the political department of the camp, declared on September 21, 1946:<sup>128</sup>

*"In early autumn of 1941 the first transport of Russian prisoners of war arrived at Auschwitz. All were officers, about 600 of them. They were all pushed into Block 11 – at that time Block 13, according to the old number-*

<sup>124</sup> Deposition of Józef Koczorowski. APMO, Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4, p. 34.

<sup>125</sup> Deposition of Ludwik Rajewski. APMO, Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4, p. 56.

<sup>126</sup> The term "Kiesgrupie" used here stands for the German "Kiesgrube" (gravel pit).

<sup>127</sup> Deposition of Roman Taul, September 10, 1946. APMO, Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4a, p. 99.

<sup>128</sup> Deposition of Feliks Myłyk. APMO, Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4a, pp. 127f.



*ing system – and were gassed there, together with a certain number of patients selected in the inmate sickbay. The corpses of those gassed were taken to the crematorium on trucks during the night and were burned there.”*

The topic of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz came up also during the preparation and the hearing of the Krakow trial against the camp garrison. On February 5, 1946, witness Zygmunt Smużewski, deported to Auschwitz on June 14, 1940, expressed himself as follows in this respect:<sup>129</sup>

*“In September of 1941 the first transport of Russian prisoners arrived and at that time the first gassing test with detainees was carried out. It took place in the Bunker of barrack 11 [w bunkrze 11 baraku]. On that occasion, 980 persons were gassed, mostly Russian POWs, but also other detainees – the sick and those unable to work: all through the following night the corpses were taken to the crematorium of Old Auschwitz.”*<sup>130</sup>

The witness Ludwik Banach, deported to Auschwitz on August 29, 1941, who had been part of the penal company, gave his account on July 18, 1947:<sup>131</sup>

*“On that same day, all those who occupied Block 11 were moved to Block 5a, which was still under construction. We stayed there three days, continuing to go to work. During that time, I was taken to Block 11 together with several tens of colleagues in order to clean the block of corpses. This work was supervised by Oberscharführer Gehring – who resembles the man in the photograph shown to me. [...]*

*After we had entered the block, we saw a horrible sight. There were some 800 Russians in fatigue uniforms without insignia, but some of them had ID tags; I don't know any Russian, but among us there were some who did. They told me that from the tags one could see that they were officers – I remember ranks of lieutenant colonel etc. When we entered, we were given gas masks. The corpses were bluish, one could see traces of blood around their mouths and noses. On the floor there was something like broken lumps of sugar, also something green the shape and size of sweets. Lastly, on the floor there were tin cans or cartons with 'Gas' written on them. We carried the corpses into the yard, and then other detainees took them to the crematorium on carts. That was on September 15, 1941. After we had cleaned the block, the whole penal company moved back into that same*

<sup>129</sup> Deposition of Zygmunt Smużewski, February 5, 1946. APMO, sygn. Drp.ZOd/78, camp garrison trial, Vol. 53, pp. 12f.

<sup>130</sup> “w Starym Oświęcimiu”

<sup>131</sup> Deposition of Ludwik Banach, July 18, 1947. APMO, sygn. Drp.ZOd/55, camp garrison trial, Vol. 55, pp. 101f.

*block. I wish to add that among the 800 gassed there were 120 political detainees.”*

On September 19, 1947, witness Bogdan Gliński, deported to Auschwitz on April 5, 1941, (ID 11958) declared:<sup>132</sup>

*“When I was sick and was staying in the detainee sickbay in Block 21, I saw one night that a group of several hundred Russian prisoners were led into the yard of Block 11, which was on the other side of the street – some 600, if I remember correctly. While they were being moved in there, one could hear the screams, because the SS escorting them were hitting them with whips and kicking them. I distinctly saw – and other companions of mine did, too – that the SS escort was equipped with gas masks, which aroused our curiosity strongly.*

*Among the SS men I saw Grabner, Plagge, and Lachmann. I could see clearly that they, too, were beating these men. From the way they behaved – I had never seen Grabner and Lachmann beating anyone in the camp – and also from the fact that they were screaming, I concluded that they had been drinking and were acting under the influence of alcohol.*

*After the evening roll-call, before night-fall, all the detainee sickbay blocks were emptied of the sick and the convalescent, and those selected by a doctor were led, or, in the case of those who could not walk, were carried into the block and down into the cells. I know this from what I was told by companions who carried those patients. The convalescents were also taken downstairs. Two days earlier, this block had been completely cleared, and the detainees had been moved to another block.*

*Three days after that night, in which the Russian prisoners had been taken there, section leader Palitzsch brought in a group of inmates from the hospital block – paramedics and doctors, more than 20 persons. I, too, was in that group. We entered the Bunker and carried out the corpses of the Russian prisoners of war and those of the patients or convalescent selected from the sickbay. The corpses of the Russians still had their uniforms on. Those of the detainees were in their underwear, because they had been taken there in their underwear, which at the time had aroused our attention.*

*In the cells there were piles of corpses, and a stifling odor irritating the eyes reigned in the basement. From the appearance of the corpses – eyes shut or wide open – we concluded that all these people had been gassed. Even though the Bunker had been ventilated for three days, gas vapors were still present. On the floor there were documents of various kinds written in Russian, photographs, banknotes, and Russian coins.”*

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<sup>132</sup> Deposition of Bogdan Gliński, September 19, 1947. AGK, NTN, 135, camp garrison trial, Vol. 54, pp. 210f.

In a book of memoirs published in 1948, Zenon Rozanski, deported to Auschwitz on January 7, 1941 (ID 8214), who had been in the penal company, describes in minute detail the first gassing at Auschwitz as follows:<sup>133</sup>

*“One day in September after we had finished for the day, we were led back not to our usual Block 11, but to the attic of Block 5 still under construction. The block elder told us that disinfection of the former block was the reason for this incomprehensible move.*

*Because the 5th block was within the confines of the general camp, this move pleased us greatly. Here, we were safe from ‘surprises’ by the capos, and besides, the absence of a wall enabled our comrades from the general camp to pass us some food. After a very quiet roll-call, the capos, elders, and group leaders formed a separation, setting off our block from the general camp, but many comrades did receive appreciable amounts of ‘food waste.’ [...] The next day, we heard that one had pushed a whole transport of Russian POWs into Block 11. We had differing points of view regarding this. Some had it, that the penal company would be dissolved entirely, others had learned from a ‘reliable source’ that the Russians would be moved in with us, others still made a face as if to say that they knew a lot but were not in a position to tell. One thing was certain: we would not go back into the ‘11’ that day.*

*And in the morning of the third day before we moved out for work, Wacek, who had room duty for that day, selected those of us who were well built and who could still be called strong. I, too, found myself among the twenty selected. The company moved out for the day; we stayed behind in the block.*

*No one knew what all this was about. Wacek came to see us after half an hour.*

*‘Listen everybody! You are still in the camp and you will get ‘seconds’ at meal-time. But you will have to do a ‘special job.’ You will also be able to pocket this or that, but you will have to keep your mouths shut. Ok?’*

*No one had actually understood what he was talking about, but still we all shouted: ‘Jawohl!’*

*For the next 15 minutes we stood in line waiting for Gerlach. He inspected us, nodded, and addressed himself to us in vague terms, as Wacek had done.*

*‘In a few minutes you will have to do ‘confidential work.’ If anyone lets out even one word about what you will get to see’ – he moved his hand around*

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<sup>133</sup> Zenon Rozanski, *Mützen ab... Eine Reportage aus der Strafkompagnie des KZ Auschwitz*, Verlag “Das andere Deutschland,” Hannover 1948, pp. 40-44.

*his neck in an unmistakable gesture – ‘kaputt! A pile of ash in the crematorium! There will be enough food... Got it?’*

*We had not gotten it at all. Only one thing was clear: the work we had to do could make us lose our heads. This everyone understood. In any case, the prospect of sufficient food was a consolation. That was ok.*

*A few minutes later we moved by twos into the yard of Block 11. In the yard, we could see the deputy camp commander Fritsch, SS-Obersturmführer Mayer, the section leader of the camp Hauptscharführer Palitzsch, the camp surgeon SS-Obersturmführer Entreß [sic], SS-Oberscharführer Clair, SS-Unterscharführer Stark, assistant inspector Woznica from the political department, and our two block leaders Gerlach and Edelhardt.*

*Wacek gave the normal order ‘caps off!’ and announced to Mayer: ‘Twenty inmates ready for work!’*

*Mayer exchanged a few words with the detail head and then said something to Mayer.*

*The room elder shouted ‘Jawohl!’ and turned to us: ‘Each of you will get a gas mask. Make sure it fits, so that one does not have to call the others to carry you out. Ok?’*

*‘Jawohl!’*

*Near the wall, there was a big box full of gas masks. They were handed to us quickly.*

*Three minutes later we were ready with our gas masks on. Clair checked to see if each of us had the proper fit.*

*Things went so fast that we had no time to think. We just stared at each other without understanding anything.*

*The ‘uniformed ones’ also put on their gas masks. Wacek and the Bunker capo ran back and forth to the Bunker a few times, talked to Palitzsch who shook his head negatively, the two of them came back, and so they moved around.*

*Finally all SS-men drew their pistols. In Palitzsch’s hand the chromium-plated barrel of a submachine gun sparkled threateningly.*

*‘They want to shoot us!’ was our first thought. Our throats tightened, our eye-lids burned. The air inside the mask is thick and respiration is hard.*

*Instinctively, we move closer together. Somebody tries to rip off his mask. He gets hit in the neck with a pistol-butt and falls to the ground. The seconds are ticking away slowly.*

*They won’t shoot! Not yet...*

*Maybe we are not to be shot at all?*

*This new thought calms me, I look around. The SS-men have their guns at the ready, but they don’t shoot.*

*Palitzsch waves to Wacek.*

*‘All right! Let’s move!’*

*The room elder comes running toward us.*

*'Don't be scared, come along!'* He turns in the direction of the block. We follow him on the double, followed by Palitzsch, Stark, and some other SS-man. I am at the back of the group. The barrel of some 'pop-gun' touches my back. I move ahead and follow Wacek directly.

*He moves down the stairs. For a second we all stop... Bunker!... But the SS-men give us no time to think. Someone at the back of the group is already lying on the floor.*

*'Move! Move!'*

*Wacek stops in front of the door to the Bunker. He has an axe in his right hand. He passes it to the left and takes a key from his pocket with his right hand.*

*Clearly, he cannot find the key-hole, it takes a few seconds. From the back one can hear Palitzsch's voice: 'Get on with it!'*

*At last he has gotten it right. The key turns in the lock. Wacek seizes the door knob. I hold my breath, I pass my tongue over my parched lips. What will there be?*

*Wacek comes back. He holds the axe with his right hand once again. What does that mean?*

*Why the axe?*

*Why is he scared?*

*He grabs the door knob once again, this time with his left. With his right hand he holds up the axe, as if preparing a blow.*

*I feel cold and suddenly I feel scared. But it is a different kind of fear from what I felt before. I am not afraid for myself, no, I panic seeing this door. My heart thumps, I can feel each beat against the rubber of the mask.*

*Wacek turns the knob while taking a step back and yanks the door open.*

*The door opens and at the same time I feel that the stubbles of hair on my head stand on end.*

*One meter in front of me there are people standing! Pressed together, somehow horribly twisted, their eyes bulging out, scratched, covered with blood, immobile...*

*The ones who had been leaning on the door, strangely stiff, fall towards us and hit the hard concrete floor with their faces right in front of our feet. Corpses... corpses standing tall and stiff. They fill the whole corridor of the Bunker. They are so tightly pressed together that they cannot fall down.*

*For a moment, I feel like vomiting.*

*Wacek's voice calls me back to life:*

*'That's it!' he calls out to Palitzsch through his mask and drops the axe on the floor.*

*'Ok! Take them out!'*

*Now I can think clearly again and I understand it all.*



*The corpses are wearing Red Army uniforms. It is surely the transport we talked about yesterday while working. They have all been herded into the Bunker and gassed. That's what our gas masks were for, now we know!*

*Wacek seizes the first corpse under the arms and passes it on to us.*

*'So that's it!' I say to myself. 'our job is to move the gassed out of the Bunker.'*

*'Get in line!' Wacek shouts once more, 'form a chain!'*

*'The chain' was the usual way of unloading bricks from a freight car, but I never thought, while I was doing it, that one could 'unload' people in the same way.*

*We worked late into the night.*

*Once the Bunker had been emptied, there were still the dead to be stripped naked and the clothing to be put aside properly. The next day, it went into the 'clothing depot' and increased the stock there.*

*We counted 1,473 Russian uniforms and more than 190 sets of camp clothing. They belonged to the patients from the sickbay, who SS-Obersturmführer Entreß had designated as 'unfit for work' and who were gassed together with the Russian POWs at this 'opportunity.' [...]*

*When the 'work' was done, the twenty of us were given a 50-liter pail full of soup, and each one got half a loaf of bread.*

*The pail went back to the camp nearly full.*

*That was the first time gas was used at Auschwitz to liquidate detainees."*

In a book published in Czechoslovakia in 1945, republished in 1957 and translated into German a year later, one can find the following account by Jiří Beranowský, deported to Auschwitz on March 1st, 1941 (with a claimed ID number of 20940<sup>134</sup>):<sup>135</sup>

*"Around September we heard rumors that Soviet prisoners of war – culture officers – had been secretly moved into the camp. A test killing with gas was run on them in Bunker 11. This could be ascertained by other detainees who found the names of some of these prisoners on the walls of their cells."*

Bruno Baum was a major figure in the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz, who was aware of all the things going on in the camp, because he had organized a network to pass information to the outside. According to his book published in 1949, Baum did not know anything about the first homicidal gassing in the Bunker of Block 11. He says only that<sup>136</sup>

<sup>134</sup> This ID number was assigned on September 15, 1941. Beranowský's number was in fact 10904, assigned on March 5, 1941.

<sup>135</sup> Ota Kraus, Erich Kulka, *Die Todesfabrik*, Kongress-Verlag, Berlin 1958, p. 158.

<sup>136</sup> Bruno Baum, *Widerstand in Auschwitz. Bericht der internationalen antifaschistischen Lagerleitung*. VVN Verlag, Berlin-Potsdam 1949, p. 11.

*“at one time, 12,000 Russian POWs were exterminated within three days, except for a few who had been hidden by comrades. One day we heard that a test had been run in the crematorium of the Main Camp to kill detainees with gas. Soon this message was confirmed.”*

The story of the extermination of 12,000 Soviet prisoners of war was a blatant lie.

The witness Erwin Bartel was deported to Auschwitz on June 5, 1941, and received the ID 17044. After three months, he was assigned to the political department of the camp, where he became the subordinate of SS-Unterscharführer Hans Stark und SS-Untersturmführer Maximilian Grabner, head of the political department. More on these two persons will be said in the next section.

In 1959, during the preparation of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, where Hans Stark appeared as a defendant, Erwin Bartel made the following deposition:<sup>137</sup>

*“I remember the first gassing of people at Auschwitz, which took place some time in September/October 1941. Stark at that time came into the office and told the other SS-men that there would be a celebration. We could hear all this because we were working in the next room; there was no door between the rooms. About 2-3 days later, Stark and Grabner arrived; Stark remained in the office, sweating, and said ‘thank God we have finished.’ We gathered from the conversation that some 350 people had been gassed in Block 11. They were Russian POWs and patients from the inmate hospital of the Main Camp. I know only that aside from Stark, Grabner was present at this gassing as well. Palitzsch was there too, I cannot remember anyone else.”*

Erwin Bartel had already been questioned by Jan Sehn on August 27, 1947, during the preparation of the trial against the camp garrison as witness for the prosecution against Maximilian Grabner, but at the time he was still unaware of the story of the first gassing. In fact, though he spoke extensively about Block 11 and about Hans Stark on this occasion, he did not mention the alleged gassing,<sup>138</sup> therefore his declaration in 1958 was a lie, created specifically to incriminate Stark.

The question of the first gassing was also raised during the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. The indictment stated:<sup>139</sup>

<sup>137</sup> ZStL, IV 402 AR-Z 37/58, p. 618.

<sup>138</sup> AGK, NTN, 135, camp garrison trial, Vol. 53, pp. 237-244. Cf. Chapter V,1.

<sup>139</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 15200.

*“The first gassing of this kind was conducted on October 8, 1941, in the basement of Block 11 mainly with Soviet prisoners of war, who had been transferred to Auschwitz to be liquidated.”*

This claim was primarily based on statements by the witness Petzold, which the indictment gave ample space<sup>140</sup> and which primarily aimed at Arthur Breitwieser, then a *Rottenführer* and SS-disinfector who had been in charge of Zyklon B disinfestations of camp buildings and of the detainees’ clothes in the disinfestation chamber at the so-called Kanada I section. The indictment by prosecutor Georg Friedrich Vogel against Breitwieser (as stated during the 159th session on May 17, 1965) was based essentially on Petzold’s testimony:<sup>141</sup>

*“The participation of the defendant Breitwieser in this [gassing] procedure was mainly described by the former detainee Walter Petzold, who was interrogated on March 26, 1964.”*

Breitwieser firmly rejected the accusations, claiming that he had never participated in homicidal gasings and that he knew nothing of the first gassing:<sup>142</sup>

*“I do not know that people were gassed in Block 11 in October 1941.”*

The value of the charges against him will be investigated later. Other witnesses also talked about the first gassing. (The testimonies by former SS men will be discussed in the next section.) The witness Czesław Głowacki (ex-detainee of Auschwitz, ID 4661) declared on April 23, 1964, (40th session):<sup>143</sup>

*“I experienced the first gassing in Block 11 in early 1942. Together with all the other physicians and nurses we were employed to carry the corpses out of the bunkers of Block 11 after the gassing had taken place there. The corpses were loaded onto carts and brought to the crematorium. It was a macabre sight, we saw terrible scenes. The corpses had stiffened, some inmates had chewed up their fingers during their death struggle, others had tufts of hair in their fists, again others were tightly entangled. The gassed [inmates] had remained in the bunker for roughly two days. Therefore shreds of the corpses remained in our hands. The corpses had already started to decompose, since it was very hot. This gassing in Block 11 remained the only one to ever be performed in this block.”*

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15200-15205.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33446; Petzold had been interrogated on 26 March 1964.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4857.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6502f. Cf. Hermann Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 49), Vol. 1, p. 70.

The witness Wojciech Barcz (ex-detainee at Auschwitz, ID 754) was questioned on April 9, 1964 (34th session):<sup>144</sup>

*“Raabe, representing joint plaintiffs: When did the first gassings at Auschwitz start?”*

*Barcz: Sometime in late 1941. They took place in the cellar of Block 11. We paramedics had to take patients into this block. The night before we heard how Russian prisoners of war were being herded along the blocks. They screamed, because they were being beaten, and we recognized them by their language. I remember the scream: ‘Have pity on me!’ That was after the evening roll call.*

*Raabe: How did you know that these people were later gassed?*

*Barcz: Three days later, the inmate personnel of the sickbay had to go into Block 11 in order to empty out the basement area. I have myself seen that a large number of people had been pressed into a very small space. Plainly, they had tried to reach the openings, hoping for fresh air. We could enter the rooms only three days later. Prior to that ventilation was necessary. There were several hundred dead. The corpses were taken by means of carts to an area where mass graves had been prepared by inmates the day before.”*

At the time of the Auschwitz trial, the witness gave the following account in a German radio broadcast:<sup>145</sup>

*“The first gassing was carried out in the autumn of 1941, a few months after the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union. One day, we paramedics were ordered to take seriously ill patients into the Bunker cells of Block 11. They were locked up in those cells. Around 10 o’clock at night, we heard how a large group was being herded towards the Bunker by the SS. We heard screams in Russian language, orders by the SS, and beatings. Three days later we paramedics were ordered, in the middle of the night, to go to Block 11. We had to move the corpses out of the Bunker cells. That way, we were able to see that they had simply gassed in those cells a large number of Russian inmates together with the patients we had taken there. The sight we faced when the doors were opened was something like opening a tightly packed suitcase. The corpses fell towards us. I think that there were perhaps 60 corpses in one of those small cells, packed so tightly that even as they were dead they could not collapse. One could see that they had tried to get near the ventilation flap, through which, by the way, the gas had been thrown in. All the signs of a terrible agony were still visible.*

<sup>144</sup> H. Langbein, *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Wojciech Barcz, “Die erste Vergasung” in: Hans G. Adler, Hermann Langbein, Ella Lingens-Reiner (eds.), *Auschwitz. Zeugnisse und Berichte*, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Cologne/Frankfurt am Main 1979, pp. 17f.

*We paramedics had to place the corpses on carts, by which they were moved out of the camp. There they were buried. We who had to do this work were convinced that they would kill us right away near the graves or that we would be assassinated later, in the usual way at Auschwitz, because we knew this secret. But nothing happened to us. Later on, too, I have often seen that with the SS you could never tell; there were always surprises and unexpected things.”*

On request of the Presiding Judge as to what he remembers about the first gassing, the witness Kurt Leischow, deported to Auschwitz in the fall of 1940, stated during the 67th session (July 17, 1964):<sup>146</sup>

*“Yes, this must have happened immediately after the invasion of Russia. Since transports arrived, smaller and larger ones, part of which entered the camp and some also entered the crematory at Auschwitz directly.*

*Presiding Judge: And do you know where this gassing was carried out?*

*Leischow: In the small crematory at Auschwitz.*

*Presiding Judge: Can you also remember a gassing in the Block which had the number 13 and which we designated no. 11, that a gassing was carried out there as well?*

*Leischow: I did not know that.”*

Upon this response the Presiding Judge quoted the text, which the witness had deposed on March 14, 1961:

*“The first gassing of prisoners was carried out in the fall of 1941 in Block 11. They were Russian prisoners of war, namely a small transport, which soon after its arrival was brought to Block 11.”*

Leischow insisted on the crematorium, and as a justification he stated that he had a good friend with whom he had discussed the matter frequently, and that it was possible that he had been “influenced in some way.” He added that the Russian prisoners of war went “directly to the crematorium,” that he saw them running to the crematorium “naked.”

During the 44th session (May 11, 1964) the witness Leon Czekalski, detained at Auschwitz since August 15, 1940 (ID 2955), asserted that he saw Soviet officers passing in front of his block. This happened at night while the inmates were sleeping. He saw the SS wearing gas masks until the next day, “because it lasted quite a while, for they were allegedly still alive.”<sup>147</sup>

The witness Michael Kruczek was interrogated during the 103rd session (Oct. 22, 1964). Upon the Presiding Judge’s leading question, which

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<sup>146</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 12700-12705.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7049-7078.



should have been inadmissible, “Witness, do you remember that in October 1941 people were gassed in the basement of Block 11?”, he responded.<sup>148</sup>

*“Yes. They probably were Soviet prisoners of war. We were told that they were political commissars. The day before I had found out, probably by comrades, that we had a gas chamber. It had to be in the night, because the day after the gassing – it was probably a Sunday – there was a roll call at noon. We were in the parade grounds and an SS man – one of the guards of Block 11 whose name I do not know, but I remember him, he was a huge man – came out of Block 11 with a gas mask. We said: ‘The gassing is already over. He is going to check.’ And I thought, and I still think, that we had to participate. He was one of the two guards of Block 11.”*

He then added:

*“The defendant Breitwieser was responsible for the disinfection [disinfestation] chamber. He walked around with his gas mask very often and gassed our clothes, the prisoners’ bedding and entire buildings.”*

The already mentioned Walter Petzold testified on March 26, 1964 (31<sup>st</sup> session) as follows:<sup>149</sup>

*“The disinfestation of the blocks began in the summer of 1941. I still remember those disinfestations well, because the blocks were emptied and the prisoners were transferred from one block to another. In September or October 1941 the first gassing was prepared. In the Bunker of Block 11 numerous preparations were made. The same day on which the first gassing took place the hospital was emptied of prisoners in the morning. The prisoners were transferred from the hospital to the Bunker. They wore only shirts and underpants. They also received a towel. In the evening there was a strict curfew. At around nine or half past nine a group of about 850 prisoners of war was taken to the Bunker. I personally watched them from the gable window of Block 27, which was the clothing store. Between Block 27 and the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 was Block 21, but that hadn’t been raised yet. So from the gable window I could see the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 well. The camp road on which the prisoners of war were driven was lit. It was not dark. It may be that the lighting had been lowered. Above the door leading from the courtyard to Block 11 shone a light bulb. The prisoners of war were first taken to the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 and then through the stairs into Block 11. They were crowded into the bunker. Then the bunker was made airtight. In the bunker there were some trapdoors. They were basically the basement windows, fitted with perforated plates.*

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22185f., 22189.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6303-6306, 6274. Cf. H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 49), Vol. 2, p. 787.

*After the prisoners of war had been pushed into Block 11, the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 was almost empty.*

*I saw only two SS men who busied themselves with the gas. One of the SS man was Breitwieser, my former boss. [...]*

*Then there was the provision that the fumigated room had to be under the influence of the gas for 72 hours, and then some more time had to pass until the end of the ventilation.*

*If I remember correctly, the room was to remain under the influence of gas for 72 hours, and it could be ventilated only 24 hours later. This was what happened with the first gassing. I myself was in the courtyard after the bodies had been taken out of the bunker. The corpses gave off a pestilential stench. Dentists tore gold teeth out of the corpses. I had to stay in the yard, because I had to judge whether the clothes were still usable. But they were not. I stayed only briefly in the courtyard. Then I threw up right away."*

The witness elaborated further:

*"In an attempt to strip the corpses it turned out that the flesh was gelatinous and remained attached to the clothes, so it was impossible to strip them."*

The former Auschwitz inmate Eugeniusz Motz (ID 9589), who had served in the same *Kommando* as Petzold, was interrogated on November 20, 1964 (114th session). I have already quoted the initial part of his declaration about the first gassing in Chapter I. Motz continues as follows:<sup>150</sup>

*"One or maybe two days later a transport of 200, 150 [sic] Soviet prisoners of war arrived. [...]*

*They were officers. We saw that. There was a curfew [Blocksperr], and we saw it from the clothing depot. They were driven into Block 11. [...]*

*When they were inside Block 11, the curfew ceased and things went on normally. [...]*

*But on that same day the selection of inmates at the hospital began. [...]*

*I personally saw Entress,<sup>[151]</sup> Scherpe and Klehr together with Bock, the Lagerälteste [camp eldest<sup>152]</sup> of the hospital, running from block to block. [...]*

*In this case I mean the blocks of the sick. [...]*

<sup>150</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 25681-25690. Only the passages translated by the interpreter are quoted here; cf. H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 49), vol. 2, p. 788.

<sup>151</sup> As I have already indicated, Entress could not have been present, because he arrived at Auschwitz on December 11, 1941.

<sup>152</sup> Incorrect term, since the "Lagerälteste" was an inmate responsible for a camp or for a camp sector, the highest position within the inmate hierarchy assigned by the SS.

*I saw therefore that they were running from block to block and rounded up 100-150 sick inmates. Some of them were carried to Block 11, while the others went on their own. [...]*

*After these sick inmates had been selected from the individual hospital blocks, the following people came from Breitwieser to us at the clothing depot: Grabner, Lachmann, Dylewski, Stark, Hössler, Stiwitz and Palitzsch.*

*We at the clothing depot were all very scared, thinking that there would certainly be a selection among ourselves. [...]*

*But there was no selection among us. They came from Breitwieser. And Breitwieser had with him two or three cans. He also gave one or two cans to an SS man. And then they all went together to Block 11."*

Then an exchange ensued with the Presiding Judge about the total number of cans brought along from the clothing depot (three to five). Then Motz continued:

*"About an hour went by. After an hour they returned. Perhaps even more than an hour. In any case, Breitwieser returned to the clothing depot, and he was angry, because something had not worked there. The next day, or maybe even two days later – that day never ended – the nurses of the hospital blocks were assembled. They had to bring carts and went to Block 11. And when they came back with the carts, these carts were full of corpses, namely officers and inmates all intermingled. They drove the carts to the camp gate. [They came] to the camp gate, and when they crossed it, most likely – I suppose – [they went] to the crematorium. I do know, though, that the first experiment with gas on the first day had failed and was repeated the next day, because some of those people who had been gassed had not died immediately, since no good provisions for an effective isolation existed and [fresh] air could enter."*

Pressed by the Presiding Judge to explain the contradiction between his declaration and the one given by Petzold, Motz responded evasively, clinging stubbornly to his version.<sup>153</sup> But the verdict was merciless for both witnesses:<sup>154</sup>

*"The witness Petzold is [...] untrustworthy. [...]*

*He claims to have observed this from the gable window of Block 27, where the clothing depot was located. He claims that Block 21 was located between Block 27 and the courtyard between Block 10 and 11. That building did not yet have a 2nd level back then. He therefore claims to have been*

<sup>153</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 25691-25720.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38379, 38381f. for Petzold and 38383f. for Motz.

*able to look into the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 from the gable window. [...]*

*The witness's affirmation that he observed the events in the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 from a window in the gable of Block 27 cannot be true. In fact, from Block 27 one could not see the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 at all. The on-site inspection of the area of the former Auschwitz concentration camp by the assigned judge ascertained that the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11 could not be seen from any of the windows of Block 27 due to the wall located in front of that courtyard. From Block 27 one cannot even see the windows of the basement or the central access staircase to Block 11. At best, one can merely see the top edge of the windows of the ground floor of Block 11 from Block 27. The on-site inspection finally determined that Block 27 does not have a gable window. [...]*

*Hence the witness Petzold must have invented the description of the alleged events in the courtyard between Blocks 10 and 11. The witness Motz is also untrustworthy. Apart from the fact that his statements contain many improbabilities, he – as has been explained in the discussion of the crimes of the defendant Dylewski – has falsely accused the defendant Stark. Therefore, the Court has already given no credit to the two allegations made against the defendant Dylewski. Again, there is a suspicion that the witness, just as with the defendant Stark, invented the things he described, or that he has assembled rumors and stories of others during or after his stay at the camp.”*

The Court rejected as inconclusive all the other evidence and ruled with regard to Breitwieser as follows:<sup>155</sup>

*“Indeed there is, as before, the profound suspicion against the defendant Breitwieser that he had participated in the first gassing. Indeed, the fact that he, as a member of the pest control Kommando, was trained in the use of Zyklon B, makes this participation appear likely. In his favor is the fact that at this time it was said among the SS and the inmates that he had been present at a gassing. But with the existing evidence this has not been demonstrated with sufficient certainty for a conviction. So for lack of evidence he had to be acquitted.”*

Consequently the Court, in its verdict, was not only forced to abstain from any precise dating of the alleged event and to give no indication of the number of the first gassing victims, but also to provide a ludicrously generic reconstruction which brings no new element to the framework created by Danuta Czech:<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38387.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38378.

*“In the fall of 1941, when the defendant Breitwieser worked at the so-called pest control Kommando, the first gassing of Soviet prisoners of war and inmates from the prison hospital was conducted in the basement of Block 11. Prior to this the prison cells were emptied and the doors and windows of the so-called detention bunker were made gastight. Then in the prison cells and in the basement, in a very narrow space, a few hundred Russian prisoners of war and inmates from the camp hospital who were no longer useful were crowded and locked up. Then Zyklon B was thrown into the sealed rooms through openings. The developing gas killed the persons locked up in the bunker.”*

In 1969, the Polish historian Stanisław Kłodziński, a former detainee at Auschwitz himself (ID 20019, registered August 12, 1941), ran a survey, sending a questionnaire to 250 former detainees of the camp who had been registered prior to September of 1941, and asking them to furnish their testimony regarding the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz. He received 186 replies, and used the most significant ones for his article already mentioned in the Introduction, which appeared in the journal *Pzegląd Lekarski* (*Medical Review*) in 1972.<sup>8</sup>

A number of witnesses have described the preparations for this action.<sup>157</sup> Stanisław Pawliczek (ID 1085) reported rumors from “well informed” sources in the potato storage where he worked, according to which secret preparations had been going on in the basement during the night: the windows and some doors had been hermetically sealed, and boxes with cans of Zyklon B had been carried in. The engineer Stanisław Hüpsch (ID 889) reported that the hermetic sealing (*uszczelnianie*) of Block 11 had been done by the *Kommando* that had previously disinfested the camp. Edward Sobczyk (ID 203) noted that in front of Block 11 there had been sand, lime, and cement and that work had been going on in the basement.

Marian Zawodny (ID 8366) asserted that from the *Industriehof* where he worked building materials had been taken to wall up the windows of the basement in Block 11. Tadeusz Kopyt (ID 2151) reported that in early September 1941 a capo named Job had ordered him to fill the windows of the Bunker with earth. The engineer Leon Markiewicz (ID 3618) said that three inmates had been ordered to check the central heating system of Block 11. Jan Wolny (ID 15496) stated that in front of Block 11 a truck

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<sup>157</sup> The witnesses refer to Block 13, in the old numbering system. For greater clarity, I have used Block 11 throughout.



had dumped earth, with which several detainees had covered the windows of the basement of the block.<sup>158</sup>

Some witnesses speak of the selection of patients in the sickbay blocks, others describe the transport of the Russian prisoners of war into Block 11. According to Władysław Tondos (ID 18871), there were altogether 257 selected patients.<sup>159</sup> Edward Liszka noted that the windows of Bunker 11 were covered with sand once the POWs were inside. Kazimierz Hałas asserted that, after the Russian POWs had been herded into Block 11, three or four SS-men went in there with gas masks on and carrying cans.<sup>160</sup>

The most important statements are those about the procedure of the gassing and about the removal of the corpses. Zbigniew Tryczyński (ID 276) declared that “the following day, Palitzsch, wearing a gas mask, threw in another load of gas after having opened the Bunker and found that some were still alive. Then the Bunker was closed again. Other than Palitzsch, there was Fritzsche and the camp surgeon.”<sup>161</sup>

Other witnesses relate what happened after the alleged homicidal gassing. Stanisław Kłodziński reproduced large sections that he considers to be of fundamental importance. According to Kłodziński, Kazimierz Hałas related the following:<sup>162</sup>

*“We observed Block 11 discreetly throughout the day after the gassing, but nothing happened there. In the evening, some SS-people came to the yard but left again soon. The lights were out, and in the morning of the third day the doors and the windows of Block 11 going out onto the yard were already open. During the day, some SS-men arrived, and when they left they checked some details, which we could not distinguish. After the evening roll call, at sundown, all the paramedics were called out (sämtliche Pfleger antreten)!<sup>[162]</sup> We were about 120. Camp commander Höss arrived with the section leader [Palitzsch] and the inmate interpreter Baworowski; he gave us an order something like this:*

*‘Tonight you will have to do a job that nobody must know about. Only an emergency crew will stay in the sickbay. After the job, you will wash and disinfect, and then back to work. If you work well, there will be an extra ration of bread and sausage.’*

*At least 80 of us went to do this job. It was difficult to avoid doing so, because, after all, the surgeon Dr. Dering went with us, as did a few who*

<sup>158</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 83.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>162</sup> In German in the text.

*worked in the dietary kitchen. Of course, the SS was in charge [of the work]. We arrived in the dark yard.<sup>[163]</sup> There, we were split up into groups. Some took the corpses out from the block, others undressed them and put the clothing aside, a further group placed the corpses on a cart, still others moved the cart to the crematorium.*

*For most of the night, I placed the corpses on the cart. Along the path to the crematorium there were several posts of SS-men with arms at the ready, checking the windows of the blocks. The work was very strenuous and dirty. Altogether there were 870 murdered people, of which over 600 were Soviet POWs and 257 of our detainees. The corpses were already in a state of decomposition, green and smelly. Almost all of the Soviet prisoners were very young, not older than 18, and without military ranks. The greater part of them was of Polish origin, from the Stanisławów and Tarnopol area. We could see this from the military documents that most of them carried. They had a military document in the shape of a tag, 5 by 10 cm, rolled up and carried in a small pocket of their trousers, near the belt (like a watch) in a little Bakelite box, something like our needle boxes. We also found other objects. These, like the other things we found, watches etc., had to be turned over to the SS-men who were watching us. There were also names which sounded Russian and Ukrainian. One could see granules spread around in the corridors and the cellars in which the corpses were lying. The corpses were in various positions and were densely packed. Our detainees were pulled out last.*

*They had probably guessed they were being gassed, because we found them with the cotton from their bandages in their hands and in their mouths. The SS-men had us work fast. In the morning, the groups were changed: I was in the last group, taking the corpses to the crematorium. In the morning, around 4 or 5 a.m., the sidewalls gave way on one cart and the cart overturned right in front of the kitchen, spilling all the corpses on the ground. The SS got mad and we had to carry those corpses one at a time on our shoulders. I carried at least two in this way, and even Dr. Dering carried one as well, after having done nothing except giving us orders all night.*

*The corpses would no longer fit into the crematorium, and so we left them near the door and along the walls. Then, just a little before the wake-up call, we returned to the sickbay. Only a few stayed behind to wash and disinfect the block and the rooms. We took a bath and changed, and then went back to our work. At lunch, we each got an extra quarter bread and 150 grams of sausage. The work had been finished by about 5 a.m.”*

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<sup>163</sup> The yard between Block 11 and Block 12.

Władysław Tondos furnished this account to describe what happened after the gassing:<sup>164</sup>

*“When the paramedics were called in to remove the corpses from Block 11, I feared that the witnesses of the massacre could not survive. In a dimly lit room I saw 24-30 corpses. They were Soviet soldiers. They were all sitting, as if they were asleep. Two of them held their caps in their mouths. [...] Then, in the yard they were undressed. The corpses already had the gases under their skin.<sup>[165]</sup> As we could see from the documents found, they were simple people – farm hands, truck drivers etc. Then the bodies were loaded, 70 at a time, on a platform, covered with a tarpaulin, and pushed to the crematorium. Three corpses at a time were put into the oven. The transportation to the crematorium took two nights.”*

Jan Wolny, ex-detainee number 15496, had this to say:<sup>166</sup>

*“For two days in a row, everything was quiet around Block 11, only some SS-men went there from time to time. But one day, after the roll call, an SDG<sup>[167]</sup> and the camp elder Bock recruited a number of paramedics from each of the sickbay blocks, and this group, to which I belonged as well, was taken on the double to the yard of Block 11. There were a few SS-men, and one of them told us that we were to bring the dead up from the cellars and undress them. After having done that, we were to lay them out in the center of the yard. I can never forget what I saw after I had gone into the basement. This sight is haunting me even today, and when I think back to those days in the camp I cannot sleep all night. [...]*

*The bodies of the detainees and those of the gassed Soviet prisoners were lying every which way, lifeless and packed. Their eyes and mouths were open. While we moved and undressed them, I noticed that many bodies of those gassed had rags stuffed into their mouth and nose, as if to protect themselves from suffocating or poisoning. The sockets of their eyes were swollen, their fingers, toes, and abdomen sky-blue.<sup>[168]</sup> At first, we tried to place the corpses on stretchers and take them up the stairs in that way into the yard. But because the corridor was a labyrinth and had tight corners, that was very difficult, all the more so as we were tired and the prisoners were still quite heavy.*

*The SS were in a hurry. They ordered us to work faster. Therefore, Obojski suggested it would be quicker and easier to move the bodies without a*

<sup>164</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 90.

<sup>165</sup> This means either that they had absorbed the poison gas through the skin or that the corpses were already in an advanced state of decomposition, hence forming gasses of putrefaction.

<sup>166</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), pp. 89f.

<sup>167</sup> Sanitätsdienstgrad (rank of paramedic).

<sup>168</sup> “niebieskie”

*stretcher. It turned out that this was a better way, less strenuous, because we did not have to hold the stretcher at both ends. One group moved the bodies, another undressed them and laid them out in the yard. When I was tired from dragging the bodies, I went with the group that did the undressing [...]. While we took the clothes off, we checked discreetly what was in the pockets and found money, photographs, letters, watches, etc.*

*The next day, we had to place the bodies on a cart and take them to the Auschwitz crematorium. There was curfew in the camp. Each body was taken by the arms and legs by two paramedics and thrown on the cart with a heave-ho. The paramedics who were on the cart laid the lifeless and stiff bodies out in layers on the floor of the cart. We then pushed the loaded cart through the entire camp as far as the crematorium. The SS who were supervising us and the men who were employed in the crematorium showed us how to unload the corpses from the cart and take them into the large hall. They opened the sides of the cart, tied straps around the hands and feet [of the bodies] and then, yelling 'one-two,' unloaded a dozen bodies at a time on the concrete floor. The noise of the corpses tumbling down was very scary.*

*We dragged the corpses into the crematorium across the floor that had been sprayed with water, dragging them by one hand. Another group stacked them up as far as the ceiling. The hall of the crematorium was filled within a day, but in the area of Block 11 there were still many more corpses. As the personnel in the crematorium probably realized that the other bodies would not fit [into the hall], a mass grave was dug in the woods at Birkenau, near the triangulation tower, and over the next few days we buried there the rest of the corpses of the Soviet prisoners. Camp commander Höss himself went into the little wood by car, accompanied by Palitzsch, Boger, and others from the SS. They ordered us to put more lime into the trench and to cover it with a thick layer of earth. It had rained that day and mud had formed.*

*Dinner was potatoes with the skin. There was no place to wash our hands; we had worked without gloves. We had to eat the food like that, ridiculed by the SS who asked us whether we liked it. I remember very well that, when I first saw the corpses of the detainees and the prisoners as they lay poisoned in the Bunker of Block 11, I thought that these criminals had used chlorine for this massacre, because on the floor there was a kind of white powder that smelled like chlorine. But the next day we learned that the SS had used for the first time a gas – Zyklon B – to kill 600 Soviet prisoners of war and some 250 patients.*

*All of us who took part in the removal of those gassed, in their transportation to the crematorium, and in their burial in the mass grave were afraid for a long time that they would kill us, too, to keep things secret. In October of 1942, I was transferred to Birkenau; we were housed in the men's camp,*

*but worked in the women's camp. At that time, I saw a detail of Jewish inmates who had to dig up the prisoners from the mass grave, pile them up and burn the decomposing bodies. The wind blew the smoke over to Birkenau, and the stench was horrible. The burning piles of bodies could be seen from Birkenau. The Jews who had to do this job were probably sent into the gas to wipe out any traces."*

The reason given by the witness to explain why part of the bodies had to be interred in a mass grave at Birkenau – the fact that the crematorium did not have enough space for 850 corpses – is clearly false. The crematorium had a mortuary measuring 17 by 4.60 meters and two more rooms for corpses, the *Aufbahrungsraum* (laying-out room, 4.60 m × 4.10 m) and the *Waschraum* (corpse washing room, 4.60m × 4.17 m). This was altogether some 116 m<sup>2</sup>,<sup>169</sup> clearly enough space for the corpses without stacking them "up to the ceiling." Also, the area of the mass graves – located near the present monument for the Soviet prisoners of war – was absolutely invisible from sector BI of the Birkenau camp with its men's and women's sections. Therefore, the witness could not have seen the exhumation of the corpses from that observation point.

Tadeusz Kurant, who had the ID 4593, states that transportation of the bodies "took all night."<sup>170</sup> The witnesses Józef Weber (ID 15386), Aleksander Germański (ID 715), and also Tadeusz Kurant declared independently from one another that the corpses of the victims were "bluish."<sup>170</sup>

Konrad Szweda's testimony merits our particular attention. According to what Stanisław Kłodziński has to say, Szweda was a priest (ID 7669) who worked as a paramedic in Block 16 in September 1941. In January of 1942, in a barrack of the Kommando attached to the Buna factory, he wrote a "gryps" (a secret message), which was taken out of the camp by a civilian worker and later made its way to Kłodziński. After having described the selection of patients in Block 15 in early September of 1941, Konrad Szweda goes on to say:<sup>159</sup>

*"Some 300 patients in thin shirts and underwear were waiting for orders, standing, sitting, lying on the ground.*

*'Take them to the penal company,' somebody shouted up ahead. I trembled, I literally trembled with fear. But I quickly became quiet: the companions explained to me that [the patients] had been waiting at the SK [penal company] for a nocturnal transport. We took up the stretchers with the sick pa-*

<sup>169</sup> Plan of Crematorium I No. 1241 dated April 10, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-146, p. 21.

<sup>170</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), 91.



*tients. We entered the yard, and then – horror – they move us downstairs, into the Bunker. [...] I felt sick to my stomach in this stinking prison. We placed one of the unfortunate people on the cold concrete floor. Presently another one would be placed on him, a third, a fourth. They were arranged in layers, literally stacked! In a cell [meant] for one, detainees were piled 30, 40, finally 50! One standing on top of the other. The weakest ones were carried in, the healthy ones entered by themselves. Oh, if you had seen this column of condemned men, their horrified faces, they were suspecting that they were going into their grave. [...] I moved from one to the other, giving absolution, blessing them all. I caught a glimpse of the face of the Reverend Szulc, an old man from Poznan, seventy years old. [...] Within half an hour the steel door of the last cell fell shut. The bolt was pushed.”*

The continuation of this account, it appears, is not in the “secret message” mentioned above, but in an unpublished typescript titled “Images of Dachau,” fragment No. 4, “The first gassing test at the Auschwitz concentration camp”:<sup>160</sup>

*“After one o’clock at night, when the last cell had been closed, the gassing started. Several SS-men, through small openings above the doors, dumped into each [cell the contents of] two cans, which contained the gas in the form of small blue crystals. Then the openings were hermetically closed. [...] The wailings, the screams, the weeping that had been heard since six in the afternoon gradually stopped, until there was only a dreadful silence in the end. The main door was then closed and secured with a padlock: the villains could take a break.”*

Wiesław Kielar, who in 1941 was a paramedic in Block 16 (ID 290), described the various aspects of the first gassing at Auschwitz in a particularly extensive way in a memorandum published in 1972. I repeat here the essential sections:<sup>171</sup>

*“One day, several hundred of the newly arrived Soviet prisoners of war were herded into Block 11. The same day, quite unexpectedly, camp surgeon Entreß appeared and, as he had done a few weeks before, passed attentively through all three sickbay blocks, inspecting all rooms where there were patients.*

*The seriously ill selected by him had to be taken to the yard in front of Block 16. Paramedics then took them to the penal company, the members of which had previously been moved to a different block. We had to carry most of the patients on stretchers. Later, detainees from the penal company selected for this purpose took care of them.*

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<sup>171</sup> W. Kielar, *Anus Mundi*, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1979, pp. 90-98; original: *Anus Mundi*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Krakow 1972.

*We went back to our job.*

*After the evening roll call, curfew was ordered. Because of that, there was no more work in the out-patient section, and everyone went to bed earlier than usually. Before we fell asleep, we commented loudly on the events of the day, which did not augur well. The patients had apparently been moved in with the Soviet POWs in the Bunkers, where they had been locked up in an incredibly dense fashion. Everyone felt downcast. No one started to tell stories about the time before the war, as had been the case on other nights. All illusions were to be shattered the next day.*

*Teofil and Gienek were sure. All had been killed with gas. Palitzsch was seen walking around in the camp with a gas mask over his shoulder. It seemed that the windows and the doors of the Bunker rooms, that had been made air-tight before, had already been opened. They had to be ventilated, before the corpse carriers could start their work. And there was to be a lot of work. Some one thousand corpses. The Dresden tragedy was nothing compared to what the SS had done in our camp, right before our eyes.*

*There was curfew again the following evening. We were already in bed, somebody was telling something about his life. Suddenly, the entrance door to the block banged and we could hear the rhythmic noise of nailed boots, which made us shiver.*

*'It's Jarem,' someone said with fear in his voice.*

*'All paramedics out! Get going!'* Palitzsch's screaming order resounded through the empty hall.

*We jumped up, as if stung by scorpions. We hurriedly dressed and ran into the hall that was lit up. Peter was already downstairs, arranging us in files of two. I pressed myself into the second row, to be less prominent. But Palitzsch did not want to bother with any of us. There were more important things to do. This time, he needed us. He gave brief orders to the block elder next to him, who in turn addressed the corpse carriers: 'Obojski, Teofil, get men for two platforms. To the SK and hurry!'* Palitzsch was waiting for us outside Block 11. Twilight was falling.

*The heavy wooden gate to the yard of the penal company opened. We pushed the carts into the yard and turned them around to face the gate. In the yard, the whole crew of the SS was already there, with commander Fritsch and camp surgeon Entreß in charge. We waited around, while the SS-people were still arguing; then they called Gienek and Teofil. They were given gas masks. Palitzsch and some block leaders put on gas masks as well. All of them went to the entrance of the block basement. They stayed down there for quite some time. We waited silently. Night fell. It became completely dark in the yard. Only above the entrance to the Bunker there was a weak light-bulb, which threw some light on the group of SS-men who were waiting next to the steps leading into the block.*

*The first one to come back out was Palitzsch, behind him the other men from the SS. They had taken off their masks. Hence, the gas from the Bunker had already dissipated. After some time, Obojski and Teofil turned up. We were now split up into groups, each one with a different task. Some of us were to go into the Bunkers to get the corpses out of the cells, others carried them up the stairs, yet others had to undress them. The rest of us had to move the naked corpses further into the yard for them to be loaded onto the waiting carts.*

*I pressed myself into the group that had to do the work in the basement, so as to be far away from the SS and from Palitzsch; I was very much afraid of him.*

*Down below the air was sticky, and it was hot; the smell of corpses was everywhere. All cells had been opened, and we could see the corpses of the gassed inside all pressed together. Where the patients had been put, there was a little more space. Some bodies were right in the door, [they had] collapsed, one on top of the other. With those we started. The bodies were clinging to one another and were hard to separate. We dragged them into the corridor, one by one, for the others to move them upstairs.*

*The deeper we advanced into the cells, the more difficult it was to get the bodies out. The impression was macabre. Pressed together in those tiny cells, they still stood in the same position they had been in two days ago. Their faces were blue, almost purple-black. Their wide-open eyes seemed to pop out of their sockets, their tongues stuck out from their mouths, the exposed teeth gave them horrible faces.*

*At first, two of us would carry one corpse, but that created a mess on the stairs with everyone getting in the way of everyone else. Work proceeded slowly, and so we started to work separately. Instead of carrying them, we now dragged the corpses behind us by one hand or one foot. That was quicker and easier. For disinfection, the whole Bunker was sprinkled with chlorine [chlorinated lime], which made the work easier yet. The smell of chlorine would bite our noses, but it reduced the stench that the decomposing corpses were giving off. The stairs were the most difficult stretch. The heavy heads banged against the steps, the limp extremities caught on the steps and the thresholds, causing us much trouble.*

*Upstairs in the hall next to the washroom we dropped the corpses on the floor; other detainees then started to undress them, while we went back for more bodies. I noticed that there was much more air upstairs, and the work of undressing seemed to be easier, and so when I brought in my next corpse, I began to undress it, making use of the fact that there was already a pile of corpses there which the detainees working on them had not yet been able to deal with. But it turned out that the removal of the clothing from those slack and bloated trunks was not at all easier than carrying them, but the air was still fresher and cooler here.*

*The pockets released their load of money, notes, pictures, little things, souvenirs, and cigarettes, in short, all those things one was allowed to retain in a camp. Now all that was on the floor, mixed with the excrement and the wet chlorine, a real mess. Occasionally, an SS-man would kick the pile with his boot, stepping on what might have been a precious possession while its owner was still alive, perhaps his only souvenir; if the man saw something valuable, he acted as if he were disgusted, picked it up, played around with it for a while and then slipped it into his pocket. We were happy with the belts, which we needed for our work and which we were officially allowed to keep.*

*The first flat cart of Teofil's group left the yard fully loaded. Now Gienek beefed up his crew, to which I belonged as well. The naked corpses that we had moved over the steps into the yard underwent a special treatment. The dentists, watched by the SS, checked the mouths of the dead, and if there were any gold teeth or golden jaws [sic] they pulled them out with their pliers. [...]*

*The load grew and grew. It became more and more difficult to lift up the corpses. Gienek placed them closely together, like sheaves of wheat. One, two! The corpse, held by its hands and feet, flew up in a finely controlled arc, for Gienek to catch. With his legs spread apart, he stood among those trunks, those arms, those feet, and those heads. He stacked the corpses tidily in layers, to get as many as possible on one cart. That way he saved us time and effort; we all wanted to get over with the job quickly.*

*I hid on the other side of the overloaded cart in order to get some rest and to be safe from the all-seeing eyes of those drunken SS-guards. Gienek announced 'the cart is ready and loaded,' jumping down from the top layer of those dozens of corpses. 'Then move the baggage out!' yelled one of those boozed-up Scharführers.*

*One, two!... We carted them well into the morning. Later, at our block, we got extra rations. But no one was in a position to eat anything. What we needed was sleep, to be able to go back to work the next night.*

*We knew that we would not be spared this. In the evening, we marched back to Block 11 as before. We no longer needed any instructions. We hitched ourselves up to the cart. The yard of the penal company vanished in the dark behind us, night fell earlier than before. The chlorine and the dirt melted into a slimy and smooth surface. The stench stayed in the air, with its nauseating smell of decomposing bodies. [...]*

*The corpses were already partly decomposed. We made our job easier by tying belts around the hands, the feet, or the neck of the gassed bodies, so as not to touch them with our hands, and then we dragged the gluey and bloated corpses across the concrete or the dirt of the yard up to the cart. Then, in the usual way, we swung the bodies on the cart. [...]*



*At the entrance to the crematorium, the water glistened on the concrete wet with rain. [...] That was the last load. On the double, we dragged the corpses, first through the large hall, then to the right, past the room where autopsies were performed on the corpses. Another alcove with urns and then this long hall, already half full of bodies, a body reservoir, in a way. A second door led to the furnace hall with its ovens. Detainees stripped down to their waist ran back and forth. The crew of the small crematorium could not keep up, so they fed two bodies simultaneously into the ovens. Our work was done, but they had work to do for the next so many days."*

### 3. Testimonies of the SS Personnel

Besides Rudolf Höss, whose testimony has already been examined in Chapter I, other members of the SS made statements concerning the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz.

Hans Aumeier,<sup>172</sup> then *SS-Hauptsturmführer*, had been moved to Auschwitz on February 16, 1942, where he held the position of *1. Schutzhaftlagerführer* (1st head of the Protective Custody Camp) at the Main Camp until August 15, 1943. From October 1943 onwards, he was commander of the Vaivara camp in Estonia. In February of 1945 he commanded the Mysen camp in Norway, the country in which the British arrested him on June 11, 1945. In a report written on July 25, 1945, he states:<sup>173</sup>

*"If I remember correctly, it was in November or December of 1942 that the first gassing of some 50 – 80 Jewish detainees was undertaken. It took place in the mortuary of the Crematorium In Lager I, under the direction of the camp surgeon, of Untersturmführer Grabener [Grabner], the L.K. [the camp commander] and some medical personnel. I was not present myself, and I did not know in advance that this gassing would be implemented."*

Pery Broad<sup>172</sup> was transferred to Auschwitz on April 8, 1942, and assigned to the political department of the camp on June 18 of that year. On July 13, 1945, he drew up a memorandum, which disappeared immediately. It resurfaced on April 20, 1964, at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. In the edition of the document prepared by the Auschwitz Museum we read the following:<sup>174</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Regarding this witness see my book on *Auschwitz: Crematorium I*, reprint, The Barnes Review, Washington, DC, 2010.

<sup>173</sup> PRO, File WO.208/4661. Report by H. Aumeier dated July 25, 1945, p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> P. Broad, "KZ-Auschwitz," *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, no. 9, 1966, pp. 29f.



*“In Block 11 there were cells with little windows, which did not offer a view, being situated as they were below ground level, but which at least allowed some air to reach the cells. There were also dark cells. A narrow ventilation duct ending in mysterious metal boxes attached to the outside wall provided little more than the minimum of air for respiration. Altogether forty Russians who had been pressed with brute force into one of those cells and who literally could not move, suffocated in it. Apart from these dark cells that had, after all, a floor area of some 8 square meters, four stand-up cells completed the torture chambers of this building. [...]*

*One day they pulled the corpses of Russian POWs out of a dark cell. As they lay in the yard, they looked strangely bloated and bluish, even though they were still relatively fresh. Some older inmates who had participated in the World War [One], remembered having seen such corpses during the war. They suddenly realized what had happened here... Gas!*

*The first test for this most appalling crime that Hitler and his cronies were planning and even managed to carry out to a horrifying and unforgivable degree, had been run successfully.”*

The former SS-Untersturmführer Maximilian Grabner, who was in charge of the political department at Auschwitz between May of 1940 and September of 1943 and who, according to several witnesses, had participated personally in the first homicidal gassing, made various statements in this respect. During an interrogation on September 1st, 1945, he stated:<sup>175</sup>

*“Auschwitz detainees were murdered by gassing from early 1942 onwards, initially in Block 11. I have seen those gassings myself, the SS personnel walked around with gas masks, the detainees, 20-40 of them at a time, were herded into the cells. Then the cells were made [air-]tight and gas was fed in.”*

He came back to this during the interrogation of September 26, 1945:<sup>176</sup>

*“Furthermore, 2,000 Russians, probably partisans, who had been held in the Bunker of Block 11 in complete isolation from the rest of the camp, were gassed in two groups of 1,000 each. Originally they were to be shot, but gassing was adopted on the suggestion of Höss and Dr. Schwela. That was the first real gassing action.”*

Having been extradited to Poland, Grabner drew up a *“Bericht über das Lager Auschwitz”* (Report on the Auschwitz Camp), in which he stated:<sup>177</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Interrogation of Maximilian Grabner, Vienna, September 1, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 26.

<sup>176</sup> Interrogation of Maximilian Grabner, Vienna, September 26, 1945. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-ZOd/78, camp garrison trial, Vol. 53, p. 65.

<sup>177</sup> Maximilian Grabner, *“Bericht über das Lager Auschwitz,”* Krakow, September 17, 1947. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-ZO /53b, camp garrison trial, Vol. 53b, p. 358.

*“In the winter of 1941-1942, two transports of allegedly Russian partisans were said to have arrived. Their admission was done in secret by Höss, Fritsch, Seidler, Dr. Schwela, Hössler, Pallitsch [Palitzsch], and possibly some blockleaders. As far as I was able to find out, the two transports had been taken to the camp to be executed.<sup>178</sup> The order was carried out, also in secret, by those mentioned, and is said to have taken place in Block 11. At this action the first test gassing is said to have been implemented. Transfer papers were not visible either, and I do not know whether any were handed over when the transport arrived or sent to the camp later.”*

Hans Stark, former SS-Unterscharführer, joined the political department at Auschwitz in June of 1941 and was attached to Grabner. According to several witnesses, he too had taken part in the first homicidal gassing. In 1959, during the preparation of the Auschwitz trial, he vehemently denied the accusations leveled against him by Erwin Bartel, which we have already dealt with, even though Stark had made other statements that were much more dangerous for himself.<sup>179</sup> Stark insisted that he was not involved in the first gassing.<sup>180</sup>

*“The Zyklon B was stored in the SS sickbay and was used for disinfection purposes. Who it was that hit on the idea of using it to gas people, I do not know, but SS personnel in the camp rumored that it had been tried for the first time on detainees in a cell of Block 11. Who ordered and who executed this test, I do not know, but Schutzhaftlagerführer Fritsch is said to have been present at the test. That is all I know.”*

During the hearing, Stark did not even refer to that rumor, asserting that the Soviet POWs had been shot, not gassed:<sup>181</sup>

*“During my stay only two transports of Russian commissars arrived. In September/October 1941 the commissars were shot at the Black Wall between Block 11 and Block 10.”*

During his pre-trial interrogation on March 29, 1961, former SS-Untersturmführer Henry Storch, who had been First SS Paramedic at Auschwitz, expressed himself in vague terms on the first homicidal gassing:<sup>182</sup>

*“I think it was in the spring of 1941 that I learned of people having been killed for the first time by means of Zyklon B in the basement of Block 11*

<sup>178</sup> “*sie zu egzekutieren*” sic.

<sup>179</sup> Stark declared *i.a.* to have performed a homicidal gassing in Crematorium I at Auschwitz; see my book on Crematorium I, *op. cit.* (note 172).

<sup>180</sup> Interrogation of Hans Stark on April 23, 1959. ZStL, AR-Z 37/58 SB 6, p. 948.

<sup>181</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), p. 4816. Cf. Hermann Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 49), Vol. 1, p. 438.

<sup>182</sup> Staatsanwaltschaft..., *op. cit.* (note 111), Vol. 46, pp. 8217-8219.

(penal block) of the Main Camp. Up to that time, this gas had been used exclusively for disinfection purposes. Disinfection being a matter handled by the administration, this Zyklon B was also procured by the administration. While I was at Auschwitz, neither the camp surgeon nor the pharmacy had to procure or distribute the Zyklon B. If this were to have changed later on, it should be possible to determine this on the basis of the pharmacy files – if still available – which list all incoming and outgoing pharmaceuticals and other things.

On the day after the gassing itself, I saw the dead in the basement, probably in the company of the then camp surgeon. No further gassing took place in those basement rooms.

As far as I remember, the dead were Polish POWs who were still completely dressed. I cannot state a precise figure, but there surely were more than one hundred of them. The corpses were lying in several rooms, in which they had probably been gassed. As far as I can say, none of them showed any signs of violence. The faces were not discolored and the bodies were not twisted up.

Regarding the gassing procedure as such, I was not informed about it, neither before nor after the event, because the camp leaders kept completely quiet about it, also toward staff who were not involved. I can therefore make no statements as to who ordered the gassing or who implemented it. I do know, however, that SS personnel were sent to Berlin more or less at the same time in order to become acquainted with the handling of this very dangerous Zyklon B gas. As far as I know, this training took place not at some SS institution, but at a private company, the name of which I have never known.

The people involved were medical personnel, who were detailed to this short training course in order to learn about the handling of Zyklon B for the purpose of disinfection. I know for a fact that only disinfection was the topic, because at that time no one had yet thought about gassing people. The idea of killing people probably arose when the gas was used for disinfection. The dangerous character of Zyklon had become known in the camp due to the great care that had to be taken for disinfections. [...]. I had entered the cellar at the request of my superior, camp surgeon Dr. Popiersch, in order to confirm that there was no longer any risk of toxic gas as a result of the basement's ventilation. That was the only reason why the camp surgeon had asked me to come along.

He himself had to ascertain the death of these people and to confirm that the cellar was now safe for use. To whom he reported about our findings, I have not learned. The whole operation of the inspection took less than a quarter of an hour.

I must add in this connection that neither the camp surgeon nor I, the pharmacist, had been informed previously about the gassing as such. No

*one came to see me to ask for advice regarding the planned gassing. I am positive that Dr. Popiersch did not know about this, either, as he would surely have spoken to me about it."*

During the 65th session of the Auschwitz Trial (July 13, 1964), under the leading questions of the Prosecutor and the President Judge, which implied the answers desired, Henry Storch tried clumsily to somehow make his previous statements match those of the indictment. On the other hand, while in prison, he had read the so-called memoirs of Rudolf Höss, so that "he had learned more about this."<sup>183</sup> First he corrected the date of the alleged first gassing, which initially was too inconsistent with the theory of the prosecution:<sup>184</sup>

*"Prosecutor Vogel: Do you know when this gassing was conducted in the basements of Block 11?*

*Storch [pausing]: Maybe in August*

*Vogel: But according to the testimonies we have so far it was in the fall.*

*Storch: Yes*

*Vogel: So a few months later still.*

*Storch [interrupts]: I just told you, maybe.*

*Vogel: Yes.*

*Storch: It is 25 years ago. I know very well that it took place, but...*

*Vogel [interrupts]: Yes, so, as a reminder, a help for your memory should be the fact that you left for a few weeks in November 41...*

*Storch [interrupts]: In November 41.*

*Vogel: 41.*

*Storch: Yes.*

*Vogel: And those gassings are said to have been several weeks before that.*

*Storch: Yes, I just said, in – what did I say?*

*Vogel: August.*

*Storch: August. Yes, August, September, I don't want to commit myself here.*

*Vogel [interrupts]: In a previous interview you felt it was in the spring. But this certainly was not the case.*

*Storch: No, I don't think so. I think it was, I do not mean late that year, but around August, September. Maybe I'm wrong here. Because like everyone I have seen so much during the war years that I cannot vouch for it that it was exactly in that month."*

Storch also put in doubt that the alleged victims were Poles ("Yes, just now I did not deny that that they could have been Poles. But I cannot say in

<sup>183</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), p. 12123.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12146-12148.

good conscience that they were Poles”)<sup>185</sup> and tried to muddy the waters regarding the number of victims, before reiterating that they could have been about 100 (“Yes, I just said that there were several dozen. 8 times 12 is 96”),<sup>185</sup> then saying that they could also have numbered “several hundred.”<sup>186</sup> He confirmed, however, that the basement cell doors had been removed and that the corpses were found in individual rooms.<sup>187</sup> Storch also provided further details about his own task:<sup>188</sup>

*“The gassing was probably conducted with Zyklon B. None of us knew for certain what was happening, except for those who participated directly. The next morning the camp physician, Dr. Popiersch, ordered me to go with him into the basement to ascertain from the smell, the perception, that there were no traces of Zyklon, so that the basement could be cleared.”*

Since the gassing had allegedly occurred with hydrogen cyanide, whose smell remotely resembles some aspects of the scent of bitter almond, Dr. Popiersch and Storch went down into the gassed basement to check by sniffing whether that smell could still be perceived.<sup>189</sup> They found all the windows open and did not perceive any smell of bitter almonds.<sup>190</sup>

I will conclude this chapter with a testimony regarding Karl Fritzsche whose hearsay character is typical for the topic of this study. On Good Friday of 1945, at Dora labor camp, then a subcamp of the Buchenwald camp, a “*Führerbesprechung*” (staff meeting) took place, in which a certain “*Standartenoberjunker*” (ensign) Alfred Kurske is said to have participated. He later is said to have talked to his friend SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Karl Kahr, who in turn was interrogated by an unknown person at Landshut on September 19, 1945. At that time he declared:<sup>191</sup>

*“SS-Hauptsturmführer Fritsch told me that he was the inventor of the Auschwitz gas chambers and claimed to have built them himself. He was always playing around with his revolver and bragged about personally having laid flat thousands of detainees at Auschwitz.”*

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12160.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12161.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12126.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12122.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12124.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12129.

<sup>191</sup> Minutes of the interview conducted at Landshut on September 19, 1945, with the former SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Dr. Karl Kahr. NO-1948, p. 3.



## Chapter IV: Critical and Comparative Source Analysis

Are the testimonies presented in the preceding chapter reliable and in agreement? Can we draw from them a coherent reconstruction of the alleged first homicidal gassing which is free of contradictions? And are the reconstructions undertaken so far irreproachable with regard to the historiographic method used?

An unambiguous answer to these questions can derive only from a critical and comparative analysis of the testimonies, which would examine their assertions from all essential points of view of this alleged event, beginning with the claimed crime scene itself and the date on which the crimes is said to have taken place. This chapter is devoted to such a verification.

### 1. The Location of the First Gassing

A message from the secret resistance at Auschwitz dated July 2nd, 1942, notes the following with respect to the first homicidal gassing:<sup>192</sup>

*“The first use of gas chambers took place in June of 1941. A transport of 1700 ‘incurably ill’ patients was formed, which was [allegedly] sent to the Dresden sanitarium, but actually went to the building that had been transformed into a gas chamber [do budynku przebudowanego na komorę gazową].”*

Polish historiography furnishes a different version of this alleged event. In the first edition of the *Auschwitz Kalendarium*, Danuta Czech writes on July 28, 1941:<sup>193</sup>

*“Arrival of a special commission in accordance with Himmler’s order, a member of which was Dr. Schumann. This commission reviewed all invalids, cripples, and those chronically ill who had been selected under the*

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<sup>192</sup> “Obóz koncentracyjny Oświęcim...,” *op. cit.* (note 84), p. 47.

<sup>193</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 21), pp. 106f.

*pretext that they would be sent to a different camp with lighter work. Section leader Hössler took this transport of 557 detainees to the mental institution of Königstein in Saxony. Hössler reported to Höss that these detainees were gassed in the shower room by the introduction of carbon monoxide through the shower heads."*

In a later article titled "The first selection for gas at Auschwitz – the transport to the 'sanitarium' at Dresden," Stanisław Kłodziński looks specifically into this alleged event. He asserts that the gassing of these detainees occurred not at Königstein, but "near Sonnenstein, some 20 km from Dresden."<sup>194</sup>

In the second German edition of the *Auschwitz Kalendarium*, Danuta Czech "corrects" the previous entry and writes under the same date that the detainees were gassed at Sonnenstein near Pirna.<sup>195</sup> The historicity of this event is not based on any document, but only on indirect testimonies, in particular that of Rudolf Höss. We have no direct testimony from persons who might have been present at the killing or seen the corpses of the alleged victims. All the testimonies collected by Stanisław Kłodziński, in fact, refer exclusively to the departure of the transport from Auschwitz. Hence, even if such a transport actually did leave the camp, there is no proof that it was exterminated by way of a gassing.

After having spoken about the special commission of Dr. Schumann, Rudolf Höss, the most important witness with respect to this alleged gassing, stated during his trial only:<sup>194</sup>

*"In accordance with Schumann's orders, Hössler took these detainees to the mental health institute at Königstein in Saxony, where patients had been liquidated before. As Hössler reported to me, the patients from Auschwitz were led into a bathroom in that institution and killed by means of carbon monoxide introduced into the bathroom through the openings of the showers. Only this one transport from Auschwitz went to Königstein."*

Without giving any details, Rudolf Höss affirms in a general way that the above-mentioned special commission arrived at Auschwitz "in 1941."

Maximilian Grabner, too, mentions this alleged gassing, but places it eight months later:<sup>196</sup>

<sup>194</sup> Stanisław Kłodziński, "Pierwsza oświęcimska selekcja do gazu. Transport do 'sanatorium Dresden'," *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. I, 1970, p. 40.

<sup>195</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 22), pp. 105f.

<sup>196</sup> Interrogation of Maximilian Grabner, Vienna, September 26, 1945. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-ZOd/78, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 53, p. 64.

*“The first gassings, ordered from Berlin under the designation 14 f 13,<sup>[197]</sup> signed by Glücks, took place in March of 1942. I have seen this order myself and have made a copy. The matter was handled by Obermedizinalrat Schumann and concerned the ridding of the camp of incorrigibles, professional criminals, physically disabled, contagious persons, and incurables. There were some 600 altogether. The detainees in question were not gassed in the Auschwitz camp, but near Dresden, I believe.”*

Thus, Danuta Czech’s account has no greater value than the resistance movement’s message of July 2nd, 1942, cited initially, but it differs from the latter not only with respect to the date and number of victims, but also as to the place of this first gassing. The first message says, after all, that it did neither occur at Königstein nor at Sonnenstein, but “in the building transformed into a gas chamber,” therefore not even in the basement of Block 11 either, because the latter had undergone no architectural change for the alleged gassing. Furthermore, the witness Leon Głogowski declared explicitly that the first gassing test was implemented at Birkenau on July 28, 1941, with 50 persons.<sup>198</sup> Finally, according to Hans Aumeier, Bruno Baum and Kurt Leischow, the first gassing was performed in Crematorium I at Auschwitz.

Therefore, the testimonies do not even agree on the location of the first homicidal gassing: it was either Bunker 11, or the Auschwitz Crematorium I, or in Birkenau, or in Königstein or Sonnenstein.

## 2. The Date of the First Gassing

According to the *Auschwitz Kalendarium*, the first homicidal gassing was carried out in the basement of Block 11 at Auschwitz on September 3-5, 1941. Stanisław Kłodziński has corrected that date, claiming that this gassing occurred on September 5/6-8/9.<sup>199</sup> Polish historiography of the immediate post-war period makes it September 15. In 1946, Filip Friedman, director of the “Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland,” published a book on Auschwitz, in which he wrote:<sup>200</sup>

<sup>197</sup> On the “Aktion 14 f 13” see my study *Auschwitz: assistenza sanitaria, “selezione” e “Sonderbehandlung” dei detenuti immatricolati*. Effepi, Genova 2010, pp. 101-115 (Engl: *Healthcare at Auschwitz*, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, in preparation).

<sup>198</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 194), p. 46.

<sup>199</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 89.

<sup>200</sup> F. Friedman, *This Was Oswiecim. The Story of a Murder Camp*, The United Jewish Relief Appeal, London 1946, p. 18.

*“The first victims were gassed on September 15, 1941, in Block II [sic], in a former munitions store building. A number of Russian prisoners, 600 to 700, and several hundred Polish prisoners were used for this first experiment.”*

That date was also accepted by Nachman Blumental, another member of the Commission,<sup>201</sup> as well as by Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka.<sup>202</sup> Judge Jan Sehn, however, although he had interviewed a number of witnesses who claimed to know about the first gassing, limited himself to a general reference to the summer of 1941. This dating was also used in the verdict of the Höss trial, whereas in the indictment in the trial of the camp garrison the alleged event was moved to the autumn of 1941 without explanation. Even the verdict of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, despite (or precisely because of) the numerous witnesses called, was forced to place it approximately “in the fall of 1941.”

All the datings are completely without foundation. Strictly speaking, any kind of dating is, in principle, completely without foundation, because no archival document has been found for this first gassing, and because all available testimonies are mutually contradictory as to this and all other fundamental issues.

For Rudolf Höss, the first homicidal gassing took place after the end of November of 1941. Maximilian Grabner asserted that the gassings in Block 11 began in “early 1942.” Hans Aumeier placed the event “in the month of November or December 1942.” The witness Kula is certain the date was August 14, 1941, that day being the first anniversary of his deportation to Auschwitz, but two years later he stated that the event took place in July of 1941. Zbigniew Baranowskij spoke of August 15, 1941. Some testimonies have the alleged gassing occur in September of 1941: reports from the Resistance of November 15 and 17, 1941, and an article in the *Polish Fortnightly Review* claim September 5/6, 1941; for Ludwik Banach, “it was on September 5, 1941;” for Josef Vacek it was “early September.” Others say the month of October, like the resistance report of October 24, 1941, Józef Koczorowski and Ludwik Rajewski. Walter Petzold asserts with assurance the date of October 9, 1941, while Henry Storch refers instead to the spring of 1941.

<sup>201</sup> N. Blumental (ed.), *Dokumenty i materiały*, Wydawnictwa Centralnej Żydowskiej Historycznej przy C.K. Żydów Polskich, Łódź 1946, Vol. I, p. 71.

<sup>202</sup> Ota Kraus, Erich Kulka, *op. cit.* (note 135), p. 157. The first edition of this work appeared in Prague in 1946.

At the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial the witness Alexander Lebedev, who had been deported to Auschwitz on January 16, 1943, and who had received the ID 88349, reported that he had heard from two witnesses, a Polish officer named Rasiński and a German “professor of medicine,” that the gassing took place on September 13, 1941. Asked by the Presiding Judge regarding the date, Lebedev pointed out that two versions existed in this respect, the 3rd and the 13th of September, but that he had heard the second version.<sup>203</sup> The witness Czesław Głowacki did however place the alleged event “in early 1942.”

The date of the first homicidal gassing is therefore absolutely undetermined and, in the absence of any archival documents, undeterminable. It varies within a range of at least six months, between spring or summer of 1941 and January of 1942.

Among the detainees, there is not even agreement on the time of day for the gassing. While most witnesses place it after the evening roll call and curfew for the block itself or the camp in general, Michał Kula, from whom Danuta Czech has taken the gist of her account mentioned in the introduction, asserts that the gassing was done during the day while the detainees had comfortably stretched themselves out in the sun.

### 3. The Preparations for the First Gassing

Some witnesses report that prior to the alleged gassing, building work went on in Block 11. Building materials were brought in from the *Industriehof* to wall up the windows of the block (Marian Zawodny). For this purpose, sand, lime, and cement were dumped in front of Block 11 (Edward Sobczyk). Other witnesses say only one truckload of earth was unloaded, and the windows of the basement were not walled up, only covered with earth (Jan Wolny; Tadeusz Kopyt; Michał Kula), and that this happened before the Russian prisoners of war were moved into the basement. Another witness (Edward Liszka) says it happened after they had been shut in, and it was sand, not earth, that was used. Witness Walter Petzold asserts instead that the windows were covered “*mit Holzverschlagen*” (with wooden shutters) before the transport of victims arrived at Block 11.

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<sup>203</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 19861-19869.



## 4. The Victims of the First Gassing

The report from the Resistance of October 24, 1941, does not mention that some of the victims were sick camp inmates, but that the victims were 850 Russian prisoners of war. In the report of December 15, 1941, there were 500 victims, all prisoners of war. Rudolf Höss does not speak about sick inmates either and relates only that Fritzsche “stuffed the various cells located in the cellar full with Russians.” Similarly, Pery Broad and Maximilian Grabner speak only of Russian prisoners of war. The testimonies do not allow us to decide the exact nature (military rank) of those prisoners, because they were either: “officers” (Eugeniusz Motz, Feliks Myłyk, Leon Czekalski, Ludwik Banach), “culture officers” (Jiří Beranowský), “officers and noncoms” (report of October 24, 1941), “probably... partisans” (Maximilian Grabner), political or Soviet “commissars” (Michał Kula, Michael Kruczek, Roman Taul), or simple soldiers (“Almost all of the Soviet prisoners were very young, not older than 18, and without military ranks.” Kazimierz Hałgas). For witness Henry Storch, on the other hand, they were “Polish POWs.”

Other accounts agree on the fact that the victims were both Russian prisoners of war and sick inmates from the camp, but disagree on the respective numbers and total, and they are at variance with the testimonies that mention only Soviet POWs, as shown by the Table 2 (p. 87).

Maximilian Grabner speaks of two gassings, each involving 1,000 Russians, whereas for Pery Broad the victims of the first gassing were not more than 40, because it took place in a single cell similar to one in which 40 Russians had died from suffocation for lack of air – thus, that was the greatest number of people who could be pressed into one cell. Hans Aumeier, on the other hand, mentions 50-80 Jewish inmates. Finally, according to the report of July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1942, the victims were exclusively sick inmates, 1,700 to be exact.

The testimonies which include sick inmates among the victims are moreover in disagreement on the subject of which SS doctor ordered the selection in the hospital blocks for the gassing. For Roman Taul it was Dr. Schwela, but for Josef Vacek it was Dr. Jungen, whereas Zenon Rozanski and Wiesław Kielar saw Dr. Entress, who, it must be remembered, was not yet at Auschwitz at the time in question.

**Table 2: Claimed Victims of the First Gassing**

Witness	POWs	Detainees	Others	Total
Josef Vacek	500	196		696
Report of Oct. 24, 1941	850	0	0	850
<i>Polish Fortnightly Review</i>	700	300		1,000
Jan Krokowski	600	400	0	1,000
Józef Koczorowski	600	200	0	800
Zygmunt Smużewski	?	?	0	980
Ludwik Banach	680	0	120 political detainees	800
Zenon Rozanski	1,473	190	0	1,663
Erwin Bartel	?	?	?	350
Kazimierz Hałgas	600	257	0	857
Report of Nov. 15, 1941	600	200	0	800
Report of Nov. 17, 1941	600	250	0	850
Report of Dec. 15, 1942	500	0	0	500
Natalia Zarembina	500	300	0	800
Zbigniew Baranowskij	400	1,000	0	1,400
Walter Petzold	850	220	8	1,078
Walter Petzold	850	200	0	1,050
Michał Kula	60	260	0	320
Michał Kula	?	200	0	200 + ?
Eugeniusz Motz	200	100-150	0	300-350
Wiesław Kielar	?	?	?	appr. 1,000

Finally, there is also disagreement among the witnesses with respect to the transportation of the alleged victims to Block 11. Wiesław Kielar declares that the sick were carried to Block 11 by the paramedics, but not into the basement – that job was carried out by the detainees from the penal company. Konrad Szweda, on the other hand, affirms that the paramedics carried the sick right into the cells in the basement.

The henchman of the gassing was Palitzsch, if we believe Zbigniew Tryczyński, whereas for Michał Kula it was Palitzsch and “Tom Mix,” or Palitzsch and “the strangler.” For Walter Petzold and Eugeniusz Motz, however, it was Breitwieser.

## 5. The Removal of the Gassed

### 5.1. Persons Who Did the Work

Two categories of witnesses claim to have done this work, each one excluding the other: the paramedics and the members of the penal company. In fact, the removal of the gassed corpses was carried out:

- by Josef Vacek, paramedic, “together with 30 paramedics,”
- by Walter Petzold, paramedic, with a group of 30 paramedics,
- by Bogdan Gliński, paramedic, with “more than 20” doctors and paramedics,
- by Kazimierz Hałgas, paramedic, with “at least 80” paramedics,
- by Ludwik Banach, detainee in the penal company, with “several tens of colleagues,”
- by Zenon Rozanski, also a detainee of the penal company, with a group of “20 men.”

As far as the method of removal is concerned, the corpses were taken out one at a time by single detainees (witness Kielar) and at the same time passed from hand to hand in a sort of human “chain” (witness Rozanski).

## 5.2. Beginning of the Removal

The removal of the gassed corpses from the basement of Block 11 began

- “next day” according to the article in the *Polish Fortnightly Review*,
- “the following night” for Josef Vacek,
- “one to two days later” for Eugeniusz Motz,
- two days later for Wiesław Kielar and Czesław Głowacki,
- “three days later” for Bogdan Gliński,
- “three days later ... in the middle of the night” for Wojciech Barcz,
- in the evening of the third day, after the evening roll call for Kazimierz Hałgas and Jan Wolny,
- “the fourth night” for Natalia Zarembina,
- the sixth day for Walter Petzold.

## 5.3. Duration of the Removal

The removal of the gassed corpses took:

- “all day” for the article in the *Polish Fortnightly Review*,
- “one night” according to Feliks Myłyk,
- “all of the next night” for Zygmunt Smużewski,
- “until late into the night” according to Zenon Rozanski,
- “all night” for Tadeusz Kurant,
- “until 5 a.m. the next morning” Kazimierz Hałgas,
- “two nights” Władysław Tondos and Wiesław Kielar,
- “three nights through” for Josef Vacek,
- “several nights” for Natalia Zarembina.

#### 5.4. Disposition of the Bodies Removed

Some witnesses declare that the corpses of the victims were undressed before being taken away. This happened in the yard outside Block 11 according to Kazimierz Hałgas and Władysław Tondos; or inside Block 11 in the ground-floor hall for Wiesław Kielar. But for Walter Petzold the bodies were not undressed at all (“But those clothes could not be removed from the corpses, because their flesh had become jelly-like and stuck to the clothing.”), whereas for Kurt Leischow the Russian prisoners had been gassed naked.

As far as the disposition of the bodies is concerned, most of the witnesses maintain that they were taken to the crematorium and cremated (Josef Vacek, Feliks Myłyk, Zygmunt Smużewski, Ludwik Banach, Kazimierz Hałgas, Władysław Tondos, Wiesław Kielar, Walter Petzold). Others say they were interred at Birkenau: for Michał Kula, they “were [...] taken away towards Brzezinka [Birkenau] where they were buried”; also for Wojciech Barcz “they were moved out of the camp,” where they were buried in mass graves. Finally, Jan Wolny combines both versions: some of the corpses were taken to the crematorium and cremated, and the remainder were buried in Birkenau in a mass grave.

### 6. The Gassing

#### 6.1. Location of the Gassing

Even among the testimonies that place the first homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11, there is disagreement as to the rooms where the alleged crime was carried out. Pery Broad and Hans Stark affirm that the alleged gassing took place in a single cell; Josef Vacek and Michał Kula mentioned the “gas chamber” of Block 11, which never existed. Some witnesses found the corpses only in the cells (Bogdan Gliński, Wojciech Barcz, Wiesław Kielar), whereas Zenon Rozanski saw so many corpses crowded into the basement *corridor*(!) that they had no room to collapse and remained standing on their feet. Similar to this, Kazimierz Hałgas claimed to have seen both corpses and remainders of Zyklon B “in the corridors and the cellars.”

Furthermore, the doors of the cells were locked and hermetically closed for the above witnesses and for Konrad Szweda, but according to Henry Storch the doors had been removed altogether.

## 6.2. Gassing Technique

Only three witnesses describe the technique used in the alleged gassing: Michał Kula, Wojciech Barcz, and Konrad Szweda. Before we look at these accounts, we must first stress some important points.

Witness Kula:

*“Both the sick inmates and the Russian POWs were lodged in the Bunker of Block 11. The little windows of those Bunkers were covered with fine earth to make them air-tight. An SS-man – a Blockführer – whose name I do not know but who was called ‘Tom Mix’ by the detainees, threw the gas into the Bunkers through the door to the corridor. After the gas had been introduced, the door was closed.”*

We will later consider the rest of the account.

Witness Barcz:

*“The sight we faced when the doors were opened was something like opening a tightly packed suitcase. The corpses fell towards us. I think that there were perhaps 60 corpses in one of those small cells, packed so tightly, that even when they were dead, they could not collapse. One could see that they had tried to get near the ventilation trap through which, by the way, the gas had been thrown in.”*

Witness Szweda:

*“After one o’clock at night, when the last cell had been closed, the gassing started. Several SS-men, through small openings above the door,<sup>[204]</sup> dumped into each [cell the contents of] two cans which contained the gas in the form of small blue crystals. Then the openings were hermetically closed.”*

Hence, Kula declared that the Zyklon B was thrown into the corridor of the basement from the entrance door (cf. Photos 9-11). That makes sense only if the victims were in the corridor, which is indirectly confirmed by the witness when he says that “Palitzsch put on his gas mask, opened the door of the Bunkers<sup>205</sup> and discovered that the people inside were still alive.” Actually, if the victims had been in the cells, Palitzsch would not have been able to find out anything by simply opening the door to the basement. We have already seen that this assertion is contradicted by witnesses Gliński, Barcz, Szweda, and Kielar, according to whom the victims were in the cells. Only witness Rozanski maintains that they were in the central corridor, piled up directly behind the access door to the basement.

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<sup>204</sup> “przez małe otwory nad drzwiami”

<sup>205</sup> The plural designates all the rooms in the basement together.



Jean-Claude Pressac has this to say about the gassing technique which requires the introduction of Zyklon B “through the opening of the door prior to closing it.”<sup>206</sup>

*“It is frankly unrealistic to imagine an SS man with a gas mask on his face and a can of Zyklon B in his hand launching the contents of the can into the space of some thirty centimeters [one foot] between the heads of the crowded prisoners and the ceiling (because the toxic granules may well fall outside the room) and then trying to close the door on them without having this operation degenerate into a desperate revolt of the victims.”*

This argument, which Jean-Claude Pressac presents with respect to an alleged homicidal gas chamber at the Majdanek camp, applies also to our case.<sup>207</sup> It is all the more applicable to our case, since the alleged victims are said to have been to a large extent Russian prisoners of war, unsubdued men who would not have let themselves be gassed like guinea-pigs without putting up a violent fight – which no witness has ever mentioned.

Two witnesses declared that they saw the empty cans and inert residue of the Zyklon B carrier on the floor of the basement corridor:

*“On the floor there was something like broken lumps of sugar, also something green the shape and size of sweets.”* (Ludwik Banach)

*“In the corridors and the cellars, in which the corpses were lying, one could see granules spread around.”* (Kazimierz Hałgas)

This means that, if the victims had been packed the way the witness Rozanski described, the gassing would actually have had to be done by launching the cans of Zyklon B over their heads. Jean-Claude Pressac is perfectly accurate when he calls such a gassing technique decidedly “unrealistic.”

The witness Barcz asserts, on the other hand, that the victims were shut into the cells and the Zyklon B was thrown in through the “ventilation flap,” which is no doubt the “air hole” of the “dark cells,” such as the one in cell 20, which appears on drawing 4056 of June 26, 1944 (cf. Document 7): an opening 10 cm × 10 cm in the outside wall, protected on the outside by a perforated sheet metal case bolted to a metal frame set in the wall, as shown in Photos 30f. in the Appendix.

Under those conditions, a homicidal gassing would be somewhat problematic, to say the least. Once the sheet metal case had been dismantled, it

<sup>206</sup> J.-C. Pressac, “Les carences et incohérences du “Rapport Leuchter,” *Jour J*, December 1988, p. VIII.

<sup>207</sup> The ceiling of the basement of Block 11 is 15 cm higher than that of the room mentioned by J.-C. Pressac, but this detail is irrelevant.

would have been necessary to introduce the Zyklon B into a horizontal aperture having a square cross-section area of 10 cm × 10 cm (ca. 4" × 4") and a length of 65 centimeters (ca. 2 ft). Whichever way one looks at the implementation of this procedure, there is no way to keep the victims from plugging the small opening from the inside with pieces of clothing, thereby preventing the Zyklon B from reaching the cells. And besides, such a procedure for introducing the material would have been applicable, if at all, in only five cells – the dark cells – but not in the others. Then what technique might have been used for them?

Witness Petzold claims that the gassing was done by means of “specially placed window flaps” and says later that “the flaps ... closed,” but mentions also that two days before the gassing the windows of the basement had been closed hermetically by “placing shutters on all windows.” It is clear that these non-existent “window flaps” are only a literary device needed to render the description of the gassing more convincing.

All this does not even take into consideration that, according to other witnesses, the low-lying windows of the basement had previously been walled up or covered with earth or sand.

The witness Szweda asserts instead that the Zyklon B was fed into the cells through “small openings” or “little windows,” which were allegedly located above the doors of each cell. However, as shown by Photographs 19 and 20 of the appendix, such windows did not exist. The cell doors had only a small inspection hole, some 5 cm (2") in diameter, in the doors themselves and not “above” them, and it would have been impossible to use this hole for a gassing, to say nothing of an introduction of cans of Zyklon B.

### 6.3. Duration of the Victims’ Agony

Witness Kula, after stating that the gas had been thrown into the basement of Block 11 during the evening of August 14, goes on:

*“On August 15, at about 4 pm, Palitzsch walked across the roll-call yard directly to Block 11 with a gas mask. Because it was the Feast of the Assumption, we had the afternoon off and could thus observe the scene which I will now describe. Mietek Borek and Wacław Ruski, two assistants at Bunker 11, told me that Palitzsch put on his gas mask, opened the door of the Bunkers, and discovered that the people inside were still alive. Actually, they moved around only on all fours and were very weak, but they were still alive. So, Tom Mix was called, and he threw in the contents of*

*another can of gas. The Bunkers were reopened only in the evening of August 16, 1941. None of those who had entered were still alive."*

Hence, the victims were still alive at least 15 hours after the introduction of the Zyklon B.<sup>208</sup>

Let us note that this version has received official consecration by having made its way – via Jan Sehn – into the *Auschwitz Kalendarium*. It is, however, in blatant contradiction with the version of Rudolf Höss, who stated that the Zyklon B “caused the immediate death” when his deputy Fritzsch implemented the first homicidal gassing. Aside from any other considerations, we must remember that Rudolf Höss, as opposed to the witness Kula, knew the toxicology of hydrogen cyanide.

Actually, assuming the reality of a homicidal gassing, even a single can of Zyklon B – in the most unfavorable case a can of 100 grams – spread in the central and lateral corridors (a total of 341 m,<sup>3</sup> from which we must deduct the volume occupied by the 850 victims, *i.e.*, some 64 m<sup>3</sup>, hence an effective volume of some 277 m<sup>3</sup> of air), would have released within an hour or two a theoretical amount<sup>209</sup> of gas yielding a concentration of 0.36 g/m<sup>3</sup> or 0.36 mg/liter. Such a concentration is considered to be immediately fatal.<sup>210</sup> Hence, considering the slow release of the toxic gas from the carrier, the victims would have died within several tens of minutes at the latest rather than within hours.

One could of course claim that the evaporation of the poison from the carrier material possibly took several hours because of the conditions prevailing in the basement, primarily the low temperature, and that on account of this delay the victims might have still been alive after some 15 hours, as Kula asserts. But such an assumption is groundless. First of all, two witnesses assert that in spite of a ventilation over two days, “it was very hot” (Czesław Głowacki) and “down below the air was sticky and it was hot” (Wiesław Kielar).

Secondly, even if the temperature in the basement had been below zero centigrade (highly improbable, if not impossible, for Auschwitz in the middle of August or early September), this would not have adversely affected the vaporization of the hydrogen cyanide. From tests carried out in 1940-1941 on the disinfestation of military barracks by means of Zyklon B

<sup>208</sup> The witness Szweda indicates that the gassing began at around 1 a.m.

<sup>209</sup> Depending on the ambient temperature. I am not taking into consideration the losses by adsorption on the walls, which in this case are of no importance.

<sup>210</sup> Referring to the absolute concentration. The evaporation time of most of the hydrocyanic acid from its inert carrier material was, according to experimental data, about two hours.

– with temperatures between  $-4$  and  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the rooms to be disinfested – it was found that “in all cases, the essential part of the vaporization has taken place after one or two hours.”<sup>211</sup> The evaporation time of about two hours for the release of the major part of the hydrogen cyanide from its inert carrier for temperatures between  $15$  and  $28^{\circ}\text{C}$  was confirmed by other German and Soviet experiments.<sup>212</sup>

Hence, even under the most adverse climatic conditions, the victims would inevitably have died within a couple of hours at the latest, and the first ones to die would have been the ones nearest the door to the basement (through which the Zyklon B is said to have been dumped), *i.e.*, the very people that Palitzsch is said to have found still alive after 15 hours of gassing.

The witness Szweda asserts that two cans of Zyklon B were dumped into each cell. Assuming an average volume of some  $18.5\text{ m}^3$  for the cells and an average of 40 victims in each cell (occupying some  $3\text{ m}^3$  of space), in the remaining  $15.5\text{ m}^3$  of space, two cans containing 100 grams each would have yielded a final maximum concentration of  $13\text{ g/m}^3$  or  $13\text{ mg/l}$  of air after an hour or two – a concentration 43 times as high as the immediately fatal concentration, and the death of the victims would have occurred within several tens of minutes at the latest.

However, according to SS-Unterscharführer Arthur Breitwieser, who in his position as “*Desinfektor*” carried out the disinfestations, the cans of Zyklon B then in use contained 1 kg of hydrogen cyanide,<sup>213</sup> hence the above-mentioned concentration would have been higher by a factor of ten!

As far as the quantity of Zyklon B employed for the alleged homicidal gassing, it was 3 cans (=kg) according to the witness Kula (two in the first phase and one more in the second phase of the gassing), 2 cans (=kg) per cell (there were 28 cells in the basement) according to Szweda, or at least three to five cans according to Motz.

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<sup>211</sup> G. Peters, W. Rasch, “Die Einsatzfähigkeit der Blausäure-Durchgasung bei tiefen Temperaturen. (Praktische Erfahrungen des Kriegswinters 1940/41 und ihre exakte Nachprüfung),” *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung* 1941, p. 136.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. my article, *op. cit.* (note 46), p. 154.

<sup>213</sup> “The Zyklon B was in small cans of 1 kg,” Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 46), p. 4854. Cf. Bernd Naumann, *Auschwitz. Bericht über die Strafsache gegen Mulka u.a. vor dem Schwurgericht Frankfurt*, Athäneum, Frankfurt am Main/Bonn 1965, p. 74.

#### 6.4. Test for Residual Gases

Witness Storch claimed to have checked whether any gas was left in the basement of Block 11 after the homicidal gassing and the ventilation, having been ordered to do so by Dr. Popiersch. The test method described by him is somewhat suicidal, to say the least.<sup>214</sup>

*“Dr. Popiersch said that it was a hydrogen cyanide preparation smelling of bitter almonds. I went down into the basement. [...] No smell was noticeable.”*<sup>[215]</sup> *All windows had been opened. My task was fulfilled.”*

The whole matter took “a quarter of an hour at the outside.” Thus, the SS paramedic Henry Storch would have gone down into the basement of Block 11, obviously without a gas mask, in order to find out whether there was still a smell of bitter almonds!<sup>216</sup>

As I have stressed in Chapter I, because of the extreme toxicity of the substance, the use of hydrogen cyanide for disinfestation was regulated by appropriate mandatory procedures meant to eliminate the risk of an accidental poisoning. They were known and applied by all disinfectors, including those at Auschwitz. According to these dispositions, when a disinfestation with hydrogen cyanide had been carried out, it was necessary to ventilate the rooms for at least 20 hours, to take outside and beat all carpets, blankets, mattresses, etc., if living quarters had been treated, and finally, before the rooms could again be made accessible, to run a test for residual gas (*Gasrestprobe*). In a specific article, to which I refer the reader, I have described the relevant mandatory dispositions and procedures.<sup>46</sup>

Here, suffice it to say that the test for residual gas was carried out by means of a special apparatus called *Gasrestnachweisausrüstung* (residual gas detection equipment), contained in its integrated case, issued mandatorily to personnel authorized to carry out disinfestations by means of hydrogen cyanide. Hence it was also known to, available to, and used by the authorized disinfestation personnel at Auschwitz. The test included the use of a paper strip which was soaked with a chemical solution right before the

<sup>214</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 12124, 12129.

<sup>215</sup> According to other witnesses, one could smell in the basement the stench of the decomposing bodies and the acrid odor of the chlorine spread on the floor (Kazimierz Hałas; Jan Wolny; Wiesław Kielar). The witness Gliński declared, moreover, that in the basement “there were still vapors of the gas.”

<sup>216</sup> The smell of hydrogen cyanide is rather mild and cannot be detected at all by many people. It certainly would have been impossible to smell it in the presence of hundreds of corpses. Also, comparing the smell of HCN with the smell of bitter almond is misleading, as the most intense scents coming from bitter almonds are not caused by HCN, but by all kinds of other ingredients covering the smell of HCN. Editor’s remark.



test. This solution reacted with hydrogen cyanide and took on a more or less intense blue color depending on the concentration of the toxic vapors in the air. This strip was then compared with a graded color scale of different shades of blue corresponding to the varying concentrations and the varying degrees of risk posed by the hydrogen cyanide vapors. That was the normal chemical method used when testing for residual gas.

But ‘going by the nose,’ as Henry Storch claimed to have done, was not only pure and suicidal folly. This testimony is even outrageous, as the witness Storch, in his capacity as SS paramedic responsible for the custody of Zyklon B in the hospital, could not possibly have been unaware of this fundamental safety procedure. Furthermore, if the gassing had been performed by the disinfecter Arthur Breitwieser, as claimed by a number of witnesses, the ‘nose’ method applied by Henry Storch would appear even more absurd.

No witness mentions the test for residual gas, which was, at the time, both necessary and customary. The witnesses Gliński and Kielar claim to have entered the basement of Block 11 without a gas mask, accompanied by SS personnel likewise unprotected by a mask.

Neither does any witness mention another normal and necessary operation: the removal of the spent gypsum carrier of the Zyklon B. The witnesses Banach and Hałgas declare, rather, that Zyklon B residues and empty cans were still on the floor of the corridors after the ventilation of the basement.

### 6.5. Have the Witnesses Ever Seen HCN Victims?

The witnesses who described the aspect of the corpses of the alleged gassing victims quite uniformly agree on the fact that the bodies were “greenish” (Kula), “green” (Hałgas), “blue” (Wolny), “bluish” (Banach, Kurant, Weber, Gemański, Broad), “blue, almost purple-black” (Kielar), “blue-black” (Petzold), whereas Natalia Zarembina speaks of a “ghostly pallor.”

In the book by Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik mentioned in Chapter I, one can read this:<sup>217</sup>

*“In the case of hydrogen cyanide poisoning, the venous blood takes on a bright red color; this is due to the fact that the oxygen transported by the arterial blood is no longer absorbed by the tissue, causing the blood to be returned into the veins in its arterial state.”*

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<sup>217</sup> F. Flury, F. Zernik, *op. cit.* (note 28), p. 401.

*The light red color of the death spots, which is frequently observed after a hydrogen cyanide poisoning, is reported to be explainable as a post-mortal oxidation of the blood caused by a diffusion of oxygen.”*

The consequence of a hydrogen cyanide poisoning is thus “a reddening of the skin.”<sup>218</sup>

The answer to the question raised above is therefore categorical: the witnesses mentioned never did see corpses of people who had died from hydrogen cyanide poisoning. Their description is obviously derived from an elementary reasoning based on the German term *Blausäure* (blue acid), the German term for hydrogen cyanide: if the acid is “blue” (which it isn’t), then the corpses of any persons gassed must be “blue” as well.

For the same reason, Zyklon B is called “Blaugas” by the witness Petzold, and made up of “blue crystals” by the witness Szweda. It is well known that *Blausäure* is so designated “because it was originally produced from Berlin Blue.”<sup>219</sup>

Similarly, hydrogen cyanide cannot cause the skin of the victims to peel (Michał Kula), shreds of the corpses to stick to ones hands (Czesław Głowacki), the lungs of the victims to burst, or their flesh to turn into jelly (Walter Petzold).

## 7. Conclusion: Critical Assessment of the Testimonies

The testimonies of the former detainees and SS personnel examined in this chapter are in total mutual contradiction on all essential points, *i.e.*:

- on the location of the first gassing,
- on the duration of the first gassing,
- on the date of the first gassing,
- on the hour of the first gassing,
- on the preparations for the first gassing,
- on the physician present at the first gassing,
- on the perpetrator of the first gassing,
- on the nature of the victims of the first gassing,
- on the number of the victims of the first gassing,
- on the persons who removed the corpses,

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<sup>218</sup> W. Forth, D. Henschler, W. Rummel, *Allgemeine und spezielle Pharmakologie und Toxikologie*. Wissenschaftsverlag, Mannheim 1987, p. 751.

<sup>219</sup> = Prussian or Iron Blue, a compound mainly consisting of cyanide and iron; Otto Lenz, Ludwig Gaßner, *op. cit.* (note 113), p. 15.

- on the beginning of the removal of the corpses,
- on the duration of the removal of the corpses,
- on the disposition of the corpses removed,
- on the technique of the gassing,
- on the duration of the agony of the victims,
- on the number of Zyklon B cans used for the gassing.

Regarding the only point on which they universally agree, the skin color of those allegedly gassed, they are in error, demonstrating that the witnesses never saw the body of a person who died from hydrogen cyanide poisoning.

The technique of the gassing as described by the witnesses is moreover practically impossible to implement, and the result of such a gassing (the victims survived for 15 hours) is physiologically impossible.

## 8. The Value of the Testimonies

In the field of historiographic method it is generally recognized that a direct testimony may be in error and may contain deviations from the truth. As we can read in a manual on historiographic method, leaving aside intentional lies,<sup>220</sup>

*“we must take into account involuntary changes, real and true ‘errors’ on the part of the person speaking due to insufficient preparation, deficient information, a weakening of the memory, an interpretation of the events in the light of later events, the interpretation of the present in the light of a future hoped for but which was not to be, etc.”*

*“[Furthermore] there are also cases in which he who hears or sees may misinterpret that which he hears or sees, because he does not know the exact terms of the question that is being discussed, because he is prejudiced, or has preconceived ideas etc. He who sees may not remember correctly what he saw; he may have reconstructed the series of events in the particular perspective in which he was able to view them, drawing partly from his own direct experience and partly from what was related to him by others.”*

Finally, we need to consider

*“the involuntary errors made by the observer: errors due to a slackening of attention or inattention, to his being disturbed or excited, to the ingenuity of someone trying to piece together a coherent and logical account by making a ‘mosaic’ of contrasting testimonies.”*

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<sup>220</sup> Gina Fasoli-Paolo Prodi, *Guida allo studio della storia medievale e moderna*, Pàtron editore, Bologna 1983, pp. 120f.

All this is perfectly understandable, even natural, in a way. One can also accept that direct testimonies may contain *some* contradictions on *some* point or points. But when we are facing contradictions on all essential points of the testimonies and a description of events that are manifestly impossible, as is the case here, may we really believe that the witnesses are acting in good faith?

Which honest judge – to invoke a legal comparison – would dare condemn a defendant on the basis of testimony of this kind?

As far as the testimonies of the SS personnel are concerned, we have already seen that those of Höss and Storch are decidedly unreliable. The other witnesses cited are particularly important, because they served in the political department of Auschwitz, which was, no doubt, best informed about the events in the camp, not to mention Maximilian Grabner and Hans Stark, who are said to have participated personally in the first homicidal gassing (Zenon Rozanski and Erwin Bartel). These witnesses should have had a precise and detailed knowledge of the alleged event. However, their accounts are unbelievably terse and superficial, besides being in contradiction with each other and with the accounts of the former detainees. Nor may we assume they were reluctant or hostile witnesses, because their depositions, on the contrary, show an all too visible eagerness to please the inquirers by embracing their charges, even if this meant hurting their own case. To what extent this is true is demonstrated by this surprising declaration on the part of Maximilian Grabner:<sup>221</sup>

*“While I was head of the political department at Auschwitz, some 3 to 6 million persons were murdered in this [i.e., gassings] or a similar way.”*

Three to six million victims at Auschwitz for the mere period of May 1940 through September 1943!

As head of the political department at Auschwitz at the time of the alleged gassing (in which he is claimed to have personally participated), Maximilian Grabner is the witness who ought to be best informed on the alleged event – much better informed than the former detainees. Instead, he makes statements which are not only at variance with those of all other witnesses, but which are based explicitly on hearsay:

*“In the winter of 1941-1942 two transports of allegedly Russian partisans are said to have arrived. [...] The execution of this task was undertaken, also in secret, by those mentioned, and is said to have taken place in Block*

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<sup>221</sup> Interrogation of M. Grabner, Vienna, September 1st, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 26a.

11. On that occasion the first trial gassing is said to have been performed.”  
(Emph. added)

The killing of the victims “allegedly” took place in Block 11. In other words, the testimony of Maximilian Grabner is based on mere rumors. He had no direct knowledge of the alleged event.

This is all the more true for Pery Broad, who arrived at Auschwitz in April of 1942. For that reason alone his testimony is based on hearsay.

Like Grabner, the witness Hans Stark, moved by the same desire to please and cooperate with his interrogators and by his acceptance of the general thesis of homicidal gassings, had no direct knowledge and relied on rumors that allegedly made the rounds among the SS personnel (“SS people in the camp *related*, however...” or “*it was said...*”), whereas, on account of his position in the political department of the camp and his alleged participation in the claimed gassing, he should have been the principal source of information for the other SS men in the camp. Instead, he knew so little about the alleged event that he, in fact, did not even mention it at the Auschwitz trial.

The testimony of Karl Kahr is indirect, and there is no confirmation that his source, Alfred Kurske, did in fact receive information from SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Fritzsche. This in itself is reason to doubt his claims, which merely reflect the political climate of the time: Karl Kahr exhibits the same zeal for pleasing his captors that we have noticed in the case of other SS witnesses and defendants. A particularly absurd statement of the testimony is his claim that Fritzsche was not only the “inventor” of the homicidal gas chambers – a claim which is at least somewhat sustainable based on the claim that Fritzsche performed the first gassing – but that he actually had built the gas chambers himself.

Martin Broszat points out that Rudolf Höss had *Schutzhaftlagerführer* Fritzsche transferred “for incompetence”<sup>222</sup> – a strange way of thanking the “inventor of the gas chamber.” Fritzsche was sent to the Flossenbürg camp in February of 1942. Rudolf Höss described him as being incapable of discipline and too fond of personal initiatives. The camp commander alerted the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps to the behavior of his subordinate several times until Glücks finally decided to transfer Fritzsche.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Martin Broszat (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 93, note 1.

<sup>223</sup> AGK, NTN, 103, Höss trial, Vol. 21, pp. 256-259.



## 9. Danuta Czech's Historiographic Method

The second German edition of the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, as opposed to the first, has its source information printed in the margins. As far as the first homicidal gassing is concerned, the sources are as follows:

### For September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1941

Höss trial: volume 2, p. 97 (witness Kula); volume 4, p. 21 (witness Krokowski); volume 4, p. 34 (witness Koczorowski); volume 4, p. 99 (witness Taul); volume 4, p. 128 (witness Myłyk); volume 54, p. 207 (witness Gliński); volume 78, p. 1 (witness Smużewski).

These sources are generally identified as “Statements by former detainees.” The names are not given, but the references mentioned concern the witnesses whose names I have placed in parentheses. In Danuta Czech's listing there is some imprecision due, no doubt, to an oversight. The last two references certainly concern the witnesses Gliński and Smużewski who, however, testified at the trial of the camp garrison and not at the Höss trial; also, Smużewski's testimony is on pp. 12f., not on p. 1.

### For September 4 (morning)

Höss trial; volume 2, p. 21, declaration of Jan Krokowski; volume 2, p. 97, declaration of Michał Kula.

The names are indicated by Danuta Czech. Jan Krokowski's deposition is, however, in volume 4.

### For September 4 (afternoon)

Höss trial, volume 2, p. 97: declaration of Michał Kula; Wiesław Kielar, *Anus Mundi* (Frankfurt/Main 1979), p. 92.

### For September 4 (night)

Höss trial; volume 4, p. 21 (witness Krokowski); volume 54, p. 208 (witness Gliński); volume 55, p. 101 (witness Banach).

The names have not been indicated by Danuta Czech. Aside from the witness Gliński, witness Banach also testified at the trial of the camp garrison; the editor of the *Kalendarium* mentions instead the witness Kielar (op. cit., pp. 92-94).

### For September 5

Wiesław Kielar, op. cit., pp. 95-98.

Summarizing, we can say that Danuta Czech's account is based on the following witnesses: Kula, Krokowski, Koczorowski, Taul, Myłyk, Gliński, Smużewski, Banach, and Kielar.

In the book on historiographic method cited above, among the “involuntary alterations” of the truth we have “the ingenuity of someone trying to piece together a coherent and logical account by making a ‘mosaic’ of contrasting testimonies,” but there are also voluntary and intentional “alterations of the truth,” which consist in the compilation of a coherent and logical account starting from a ‘mosaic’ of contrasting testimonies. Danuta Czech's account is a prime example of this kind of working method, as emerges from the following analysis of her liberal employment of the sources:

- The date of the beginning of the first homicidal gassing (September 3rd, 1941) is derived by Danuta Czech from Banach's testimony, according to which the removal of the corpses was done on September 5, 1941. But the witness Kula, who is Danuta Czech's main source, says explicitly and with certainty that the date was August 14, 1941.
- The name of the SS surgeon who did the selection of patients was taken by Danuta Czech from Taul's testimony, but the witness Kielar asserts that this physician was Dr. Entress who, in the first German edition of the *Kalendarium*, is listed as being one of the participants in the first homicidal gassing. In the meantime, Danuta Czech had learned that Dr. Entress had not yet been at Auschwitz in September of 1941, hence, under the date of December 11, 1941, we can read in the second edition of her work.<sup>224</sup>

*“Camp surgeon SS-Untersturmführer Friedrich Entress arrives from concentration camp Groß-Rosen and takes over the same function at Auschwitz.”*

The choice of Dr. Schwela in the second German edition of the *Kalendarium* was thus inevitable.

- Danuta Czech takes the number of sick detainees selected (250) from Kula's testimony, that of the Russian POWs (600) from the testimonies of Krokowski, Koczorowski, Myłyk, and Gliński. However, the witness Krokowski claimed that 400 sick detainees had been selected, the witness Smużewski provides a total of 980 victims, and the witness Banach speaks of 800 Russians, including 120 political detainees.

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<sup>224</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 152.

- Danuta Czech writes that in the morning after the day of the gassing (September 4), Palitzsch opened the doors “of the cells” and noted that “some” of the Russian prisoners of war were still alive. The source is the account given by Kula, who affirms, however, that this happened in the afternoon of the following day (“on August 15, around 4 p.m., Palitzsch, with a gas mask...”). He also stated that Palitzsch opened the door of the Bunker, *i.e.* the door of the basement and not of the cells, and noted that “the people” inside – all of them, obviously, not just some – were still alive.
- Danuta Czech asserts, moreover, that during the night of September 4, *i.e.* again the day following the gassing, Palitzsch assembled “20 detainees from the penal company of Block 5a, as well as all paramedics from the [inmate] sickbay” and two other detainees who started straight away to remove the corpses. But according to Kula, the basement of Block 11 was reopened in the evening of August 16, *i.e.* two days after the day of the gassing. Witness Kielar asserts as well that the removal of the corpses began after two days, in the evening of the second day, to be exact, whereas the witness Gliński stated that it began after three days. This same witness asserts moreover that this operation was carried out by 20 physicians and paramedics whom Danuta Czech transforms into “20 detainees from the penal company of Block 5a,” whereas witness Banach declared that it was performed by “several tens” of detainees from the penal company. Witness Gliński, who was a paramedic, asserts that the operation was accomplished only by physicians and paramedics, whereas the witness Banach, who was part of the penal company, declared that only detainees from the penal company took part in it. Hence: paramedics *or* detainees from the penal company. Danuta Czech resolves this elegantly by speaking of paramedics *and* detainees from the penal company.
- Danuta Czech writes that the corpses of the gassed were taken to the crematorium and cremated, but witness Kula affirms that they were “not cremated in the crematorium but taken away towards Brzezinka [Birkenau] where they were buried.”
- Danuta Czech asserts finally that the removal of the corpses to the crematorium took two nights and ended during the night of September 5. But the witnesses Myłyk and Smużewski assert that this job was done in one night.

Note that Rudolf Höss is not one of the witnesses cited by Danuta Czech. The reason is simple: his testimony, easily available to – and verifiable by

– pretty much everyone, is too much in disagreement with Danuta Czech’s account, because he stated that Zyklon B provoked “the immediate death” of the victims.

## 10. Historical Reconstruction of the First Gassing

The brazen manipulations to which Danuta Czech takes refuge are only one example of a method that Robert Jan van Pelt has called “convergence of proof.” Concerning the first homicidal gassing, he himself has furnished a sample of this – albeit on a much more modest scale. After having cited the article of the *Polish Fortnightly Review* of July 1st, 1942, van Pelt comments:<sup>225</sup>

*“It is important to note that after the war various witnesses confirmed that in early September the Germans had used Block 11 in Auschwitz as an experimental gas chamber.”*

But as proof of those “various witnesses” he comes up with only one, Wojciech Barcz.<sup>226</sup> Two pages further on, he refers to the little book by Natalia Zarembina and concludes:<sup>227</sup>

*“As we know today, the account was correct: both Pery Broad and Rudolf Höss would later corroborate it.”*

Let us note, first of all, that neither of the two sources confirms the dating asserted by van Pelt (“in early September”). Barcz mentions autumn of 1941 in a general way and Zarembina gives no date at all. The article mentioned speaks of 1,000 victims: 700 Bolsheviks and 300 Poles. Zarembina has 800 victims: 500 Bolsheviks and 300 Poles, whereas Barcz has no figures. The removal of the bodies, for the article mentioned, takes place the day after the gassing, for Barcz it is three days later, for Zarembina only during the fourth day. Barcz has the corpses buried in mass graves, Zarembina has them burned in the crematorium. According to Höss, the gassing cannot have taken place before November of 1941 and concerned only Soviet prisoners of war, whereas Broad tells of the gassing of Russian POWs in a single cell.

So much about van Pelt’s “convergence of proof”!

The sources available allow us to recreate a painting that is different than the fantastic tableau painted by Danuta Czech and Robert Jan van

<sup>225</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 144.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, note 25 on p. 144. Cf. p. 519.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Pelt. It is a painting that shows us clearly what that “convergence of proof” really is: a crude deception which consists of creating a coherent and logical account on the basis of a “mosaic” of wildly contradictory and contrasting testimonies. If we abstain from any manipulation of the sources, the “reconstruction” that can be made on the basis of the testimonies looks in fact like this:

One day, at some point between the spring of 1941 and November/December of 1942, at Auschwitz, in the old crematorium or in the basement of Block 11, or else at Birkenau, the first gassing of human beings was carried out. Some witnesses speak of exact dates: it was either August 14 or 15, September 3-5, or 5-6, or 5-8, or October 9, 1941. The gassing was done after the evening roll call, during curfew, so that no one could see what was happening, or else in broad daylight before the eyes of the detainees who were enjoying a day off in the sun. The windows of the basement had been walled up or covered with earth or filled with sand or closed by wooden boards ahead of time.

In the half-underground basement of Block 11 either only Russian prisoners of war were locked in, who were only officers, or officers and noncoms, or simple soldiers, or partisans, or political commissars, or perhaps they were, in fact, not Russians but Poles, or they were Russian POWs and Polish detainees. The victims of the gassing numbered either 60, or 200, or 400, or 500, or 600, or 680, or 700, or 850, or 1,473 Russian POWs, plus 100-150 or 190 or 196 or 200 or 220 or 250 or 257 or 260 or 300 or 400 or 1,000 Polish detainees. What is certain, in any case, is that their total number was either 200, or 300, or 320, or 350, or 500, or 696, or 800, or 850, or 857, or 980, or 1,000, or 1,078, or 1,400, or 1,663.

The sick inmates had been selected in the hospital blocks either by Dr. Schwela, or Dr. Jungen, or possibly Dr. Entress. These sick patients were carried into the cells of Block 11 by paramedics or perhaps by members of the penal company.

Palitzsch all by himself or together with “Tom Mix,” or with “the strangler,” or maybe Breitwieser by himself threw into the corridor or into the cells a total of three cans or perhaps two cans into each cell. The Zyklon B was introduced through the door or through the ventilation flap or through openings above the doors to the cells. Gassing was done either in the cells, or in a single cell, or in the corridor, or in the “gas chamber,” and the doors of the cells were either hermetically closed or had been removed.

The victims either died immediately or were still alive after 15 hours. The corpses were removed either the following day, or the following night,



or 1 to 2 days later, or 3 days later, or on the 4th day, or the 6th day, either only by paramedics, 20 or 30 or 80 of them, to be exact, or perhaps only by 20 detainees from the penal company. The work took either a whole day, or a whole night, or 2 nights, or 3 nights. The corpses were undressed either in the corridor of Block 11, or in the yard outside, or not at all, or they were already naked.

The bodies of the victims were either taken to the crematorium and cremated, or perhaps taken to Birkenau and buried in mass graves, or perhaps some cremated and the others buried.

Any “historical reconstruction” different from this can only be the result of a preparatory, completely arbitrary screening of the testimonies and of the statements by individual witnesses, hence a manipulation and deception.

The only reasonable conclusion one can draw from this inextricable mess of contradictions is the total historical and technical unreliability of the testimonies in respect to the alleged first homicidal gassing.

If there ever was one.

## Chapter V: Sources Not Speaking of the First Gassing

### 1. Testimonies

The technical and historical unreliability of the sources concerning the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz, which we have examined in the preceding chapters, has later been confirmed by other authoritative sources which entirely fail to mention any such an event. Some of these sources are of fundamental importance. This would be inexplicable if it were true, as Jerzy Brandhuber asserts, that<sup>228</sup>

*“the fact and the circumstances of the first test killings of human beings by means of gas were generally known among the detainees of the Auschwitz concentration camp.”*

One of the first somewhat detailed reports about Auschwitz is an article published on March 14, 1942 by the German-language New York newspaper *Neue Volkszeitung*, drawn up on the basis of the testimony given by a detainee released from Auschwitz in November of 1941. This report speaks of the brutality with which the SS treated the detainees and describes the extremely harsh conditions in the camp. But there is no mention of the first gassing in it.<sup>229</sup>

The first detailed description of the alleged homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz is contained in reports from five detainees who escaped from the camp. These were published anonymously by the “War Refugee Board” in November of 1944.<sup>230</sup> The detainees in question were:

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<sup>228</sup> Jerzy Brandhuber, “Die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz,” *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, 4, 1961, p. 17.

<sup>229</sup> “Eine Stätte des Grauens. Bericht aus dem Konzentrationslager Oswiecim (Auschwitz),” from *Neue Volkszeitung*, New York, No. 11 of March 14, 1942, in: H.G. Adler et al. (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 145), pp. 191-193.

<sup>230</sup> Executive Office of the President, *German Extermination Camps – Auschwitz and Birkenau*, War Refugee Board, Washington, DC, November 1944. Cf. in this respect: Enrique Aynat, *Los “Protocolos de Auschwitz”*: ¿Una fuente histórica? García Hispán

- Alfred Wetzler (registered on April 13, 1942, ID 29162) and Rudolf Vrba (registered under the name of Walter Rosenberg on June 29, 1942, ID 44070) – both escaped from Auschwitz on April 7, 1944;
- Czesław Mordowicz (registered on December 17, 1942, ID 84216) and Arnost Rosin (registered on April 17, 1942, ID 29858) – both escaped on May 27, 1944;
- and Jerzy Tabeau, writing as an unnamed “Polish major” (registered on March 26, 1942, under the name of Jerzy Wesołowski, ID 27273).

Though they are full of details regarding the most important events in the camp, none of these reports mentions the first gassing in Block 11. To be exact, they mention no gassings in the Bunker of Block 11, nor any in the old crematorium.

Of great significance in this respect is the testimony of the “Polish major,” whose identity was only revealed many years later. It narrates the story of Auschwitz from the very early days and describes in particular the events connected with Bunker 11. The text, with its subtitles, is as follows.<sup>231</sup>

“IV. Executions

*From its beginnings until the summer of 1941, the Auschwitz camp was exclusively a concentration camp, never a place for executions. The first execution took place in the summer of 1941, quite unexpectedly. After the evening roll call, as far as I remember, 18 names were read out, all of them people from Krakow. These persons were led to the clothing depot, were given some old rags to wear (only shirts and trousers), taken to the gravel pit, and shot. Anyone still alive was finished off with a revolver. The other detainees had been prohibited from watching this execution. But it was handled in such a way and at such a location that, in fact, it could be seen from anywhere in the camp. After the execution, a detail of inmates were sent to bury the dead. This incident caused great desperation among all detainees who were now convinced that being sent to the camp was equivalent to being condemned to death for crimes against the Reich.*

*Ever since then executions took place at shorter or longer intervals; usually Tuesday and Friday were set aside as execution days. In time, a special place was set up for the executions. It was on the grounds of the same camp. The location for this was between Blocks 10 and 11.*

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Editor, Alicante 1990.

<sup>231</sup> Abraham Silberschein, *Die Judenauströpfung in Polen*, third series: “Die Vernichtungslager. Das Lager Oswiecim (Auschwitz),” Geneva 1944, pp. 70-76.

### The Preparations.

*The executions now take place always in the morning and in the following way: immediately after the morning roll call, the block secretary reads out the numbers for the individual blocks from cards that he has received from the general administration. When the cards said: 'Straight away after the morning roll call to the section leader,' it was clear that those numbers would be shot. The block secretary, after reading out the numbers, collected the persons concerned and took them to the camp secretariat, where those from the other blocks arrived as well. They checked once again the numbers, the names, the dates of birth against the general list. Then those people were put together in groups of five by the camp elder and the block men (all of them detainees) and taken to the execution site at Block 11.*

*If the execution was to take place a few hours later, they would be locked in the Bunker there. If it was to be right away, they would be taken to the washroom. Here, they had to undress, their numbers were marked on their calves with a copying-pencil. After these preparations they were taken in groups of two to the black wall where the execution was done. This walk was handled by the block man of Block 11 or by the Bunker capo (a Jew).*

### The End.

*The execution was done in the following way: the two condemned men were taken by their hands, led out from the block, and placed at either side of the wall. Initially, they had to kneel on one knee and lower their heads a little; later the execution was done with them standing. The henchman approached these people, put his revolver to their head at the place where the backbone meets the skull, and released the shot. The weapon used was an air rifle. After the shot, there was almost no sound. If death was not immediate, there was another shot when the man was lying on the ground. At these executions there were always some detainees present, from the 'corpse carrier' detail. After each of these double executions, they placed the bodies into a large box, which they piled up near the wall. The blood on the ground was covered with sand. After that had been done, the area was free to receive the following two. When the executions were over, the remains were transferred to the mortuary at Block 28 to stay there for the rest of the day. In the evening, the corpses were loaded on a large cart, together with other corpses of those who had died or had been slain in some other way during the day. The cart was pulled by the detainees to the crematorium. Later, the bodies were transferred immediately after the execution, if there were only a few of them, or a truck was used. During the transfer of the corpses, block curfew was ordered; the detainees were not allowed to leave the block until the curfew was lifted. In general, they [the SS] tried hard – but without any success – to shroud the executions in a veil of great secrecy.*

*That was the way it started, as mentioned, in the summer of 1941. Most executions occurred in 1942, though, once the penal company had been moved from Auschwitz to Birkenau, end of February or early May. They took the 'Muselmen' along with the transports at that time (a Muselman was someone all exhausted from hunger and hard physical work). Most of the healthy and strong ones came into the penal company. For crimes done while still free, they wore a red spot in front and back, and a black spot for crimes committed inside the camp. The company numbered some 500 men. Every few days, 10-15 of them were selected and shot. The others had to work hard and wait for their turn.*

*Mass Murder.*

*By now – say around mid-May – mass executions began at Auschwitz. Once, twice, or three times a week large groups of 40 to 60 persons were rounded up and shot. Unrest in the camp grew when the situation had not changed by mid-June. Once, when 120 persons were executed, the situation became so tense that a break-out loomed. The camp administration knew this perfectly well, for one day at roll call the detainees were informed that the executions had been stopped and the death penalty revoked. This explanation was received with distrust, but calmed the situation to some extent. There was indeed a break which, however, did not last longer than a month and a half or two months. Then executions were renewed, but in small groups and not very often. Then October 1942 came and brought the most extensive execution of Poles at Auschwitz; 247 persons from the districts of Lublin and Podhale were executed. The camp reacted in terror and apathy. That was the end of a series of executions of those who had been brought into the camp on the basis of death sentences. Sometimes it happened that somebody among those who were to be executed was sick or in the sickbay; then the execution was performed in the sickbay by injection. That is how the well-known artist Witold Zacharewicz was murdered. This is not to say, though, that after October of 1942 there were no more executions of people sent to Auschwitz with a death sentence. Only the method was changed. Earlier, all Aryan detainees who arrived were registered and given a number. Now, i.e. after October of 1942, they were split into two groups right away: one for those who were to come into the concentration camp and a second for those condemned to death. The latter no longer got a number but were moved straight away from the camp administration into the Bunker at Block 11, where the execution was carried out immediately or after a few days. The idea was to keep the executions secret (they were often performed late at night) so as not to cause unrest among the detainees by shooting 'civilians.' In the camp, 'inmate' meant a detainee with a number. 'Civilian' meant a person without a number, i.e. not a member of the camp. As long as the executions are restricted to civilians, the inmates*



*are not really impressed. In spite of these various changes, the execution of inmates did not stop, only a different reason was found for doing the same thing.*

### Bunker

*There is now a strict policy against so-called camp crimes, i.e. offenses against camp rules. Even the slightest thing might get people into the Bunker, with only little chance of ever coming out. The judges were the gentlemen from the political department (the camp Gestapo). Thus, these gentlemen were the masters of life and death for each inmate. That caused much spying in the camp. Even the mere suspicion of a political nature could be a reason for being locked up in the Bunker, or having contact with civilians. Spreading political news, even commenting in a group on the OKW<sup>[232]</sup> reports printed in the newspapers, some petty larceny, an attempt to escape, all that was reason enough for being locked up in the Bunker. The latter was always overcrowded. Afterwards, it had to be 'cleaned,' which went like this: The Gestapo head Grabner and all of his staff walked into the Bunker, usually after some merriment, hence not quite sober, going from cell to cell. As soon as the cell door was opened, each inmate in succession had to state his number, the reason why he was there, and how long he had already been there. It was luck for the inmate if the camp leader had with him the list of those sentenced to death. Often this was not the case. Then the life of the inmate depended not upon his sentence but upon the humor of the commander. If the impression was good, the inmate could stay and wait for another such visit. Many, though, opted voluntarily to be executed. In such a case they were beaten and ill-treated. After such a visit, 85-90% of the Bunker inmates went to the wall and so there was room for others."*

In this context, the "Polish major" also mentions section leader Palitzsch, an alleged perpetrator of the first homicidal gassing according to others:<sup>233</sup>

*"From the beginning, these executions have been performed by one person. Now it is Oberscharführer Palitzsch."*

Throughout 1941 and early 1942, the "Polish major" continues, there were no executions of Jews. They began only in the spring of 1942:<sup>234</sup>

*"Only from the spring onwards, the rounding up and extermination of the Jews started because of their descent."*

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<sup>232</sup> *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* = Supreme command of the Wehrmacht.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

This most important witness has a lot to say about the atrocities perpetrated by the SS in Block 11, but tells us nothing about the first homicidal gassing.

This alleged first gassing was unknown also to Stanisław Jankowski, who made a detailed deposition on April 13, 1945. This witness, who was deported to Auschwitz on March 27, 1942, spent several months in Block 11, making his ignorance of any massacre in the Bunker of that block all the more surprising. He declared:<sup>235</sup>

*“I was housed in Block 11, in which all the Jews at Auschwitz – a total of 50 – had been brought together. There were also Aryans in this block. In the Bunkers of this block there was also the penal company. Furthermore, there were ‘free men’ in this block, i.e. people who were to be released and who were now undergoing a quarantine in the camp. I remember that when I was explained my work, which both Aryans and Jews were doing, the Oberscharführer, an SS man, turned to us Jews saying that this was the first time in the history of German National Socialism that Jews were working and being housed under one roof with Germans. In the yard in front of the block, there was a double gibbet and the famous ‘black wall’ where detainees were shot. Conditions at Auschwitz at the time were harsh, but when comparing them with those then prevailing at Birkenau, one is tempted to consider them something like living in a boarding school. I stayed in Block 11 until autumn of 1942, spending the first five weeks in the hospital, the so-called sickbay.”*

Speaking of the beginning of the alleged gassings, he says only:<sup>236</sup>

*“I declare that at that time, late 1942, there were as yet no gas chambers at Auschwitz. The only gassing during that period, known to me, happened in November or December of 1942. At that time, more than three hundred and ninety persons, only Jews of different nationalities who were employed with the Birkenau Sonderkommando, were gassed. This gassing was implemented in the mortuary at that time. I heard from people working in the crematorium that even earlier some gassings had taken place in that mortuary and other rooms of the crematorium.”*

The SS camp surgeon at Auschwitz, Friedrich Entress, who arrived at Auschwitz on December 11, 1941, asserted in his sworn statement of April 14, 1947, that “the first gassings” at Auschwitz-Birkenau began “in the

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<sup>235</sup> “Aussage von Stanisław Jankowski (Alter Feinsilber),” dated April 13, 1945, *Hefte von Auschwitz*, special issue no. I, 1972, pp. 41f.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

summer of 1942.” He had no knowledge of the first gassing in Block 11 nor of later gassings in Crematorium I at Auschwitz.<sup>237</sup>

The first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz is noted neither in the report of the Soviet investigating commission drawn up in April of 1945,<sup>238</sup> published in *Pravda* on May 7, 1945, and later submitted as evidence at the Nuremberg Trial,<sup>239</sup> although this report deals specifically with the fate of Soviet prisoners of war, nor in the report on German crimes in Poland compiled by the Poles for the Nuremberg Trial, even though it mentions much less serious crimes, such as the execution of 189 detainees on May 28, 1941.<sup>240</sup>

The lack of historical reliability of the sources regarding the first homicidal gassing in the Bunker of Block 11 at Auschwitz is further confirmed by the sworn testimony of an eyewitness, who is fundamental both because of his function in the Auschwitz camp in the latter half of 1941 and because of the authority and prestige he later enjoyed in his position as director of the Auschwitz Museum: Kazimierz Smoleń.

He was deported to Auschwitz on July 6, 1940, and in July of 1941 became “*Schreiber*” (secretary) in the political department, *i.e.* in the Gestapo office of the camp. In that position he was one of the detainees best informed about what was happening at Auschwitz. Here is what he asserted in a sworn statement given at Krakow on December 15, 1947, specifically on the fate of the Soviet prisoners of war:<sup>241</sup>

*“In early October of 1941 the first transports of Russians came to Auschwitz. As I was already working as Schreiber in the political department, together with my comrades, I had to register the new arrivals. Within a week, 10,000 Russian POWs arrived from Stalag VIIIB/Lamsdorf and from another Stalag, the number of which I have forgotten, Neuhammer-upon-Queis.*

*The POWs arrived in the camp in a terrible state; they were starving, full of lice, and had to undress outside the camp. Even though it was already*

<sup>237</sup> Sworn statement of Friedrich Entress, Landsberg, April 14, 1947. NO-2368.

<sup>238</sup> The original text of the report, which contains a number of corrections and strike-outs, is in file 7021-116-103 of GARF. The commission did not take into account the laconic declaration by Zbigniew Baranowskij cited in Chapter III.

<sup>239</sup> URSS-008.

<sup>240</sup> URSS 93. “Die Republik Polen in der Sache gegen: 1. Deutsche Kriegsverbrecher; 2. deren Körperschaften und Organisationen bezeichnet unter Anklage 1 vor dem Internationalen Kriegsgericht,” p. 43.

<sup>241</sup> Sworn statement of Kazimierz Smoleń before Kurt L. Ponger, USA civilian, Interrogator Evidence Division, Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, Krakow, December 15, 1947. NO-5849.

*very cold, they had to go into a cold disinfection bath and, naked and wet as they were, they were driven into the camp.*

*In the Auschwitz camp, 9 blocks were separated from the rest of the camp by an electrically charged fence, and the gate had the inscription 'POW camp – work camp.' Thus, the Russian POW camp consisted of the following blocks: Block 1, Block 2, Block 3, Block 12, Block 13, Block 14, Block 22, Block 23, Block 24. The residential Blocks 3, 23, and 24 had [a ground floor and] an upper floor; these were called 3a, 23a, and 24a.*

*SS-Oberscharführer Hans Stark was in charge of registration of the POWs, and I, in my capacity as detainee Secretary, participated in it, together with several companions."*

Having minutely described the intricacies of the registration, Smoleń goes on to say:

*"Registration of the 10,000 POWs took some 3 weeks. During that time, 1,500 of them had died already, and we sent their green cards and ID tags to Berlin.*

*In November of 1941, a special Gestapo commission from the Kattowitz office, headed by Dr. Mildner, came to the camp. This commission consisted of Dr. Mildner and three persons from the SD [Sicherheitsdienst] who spoke Russian. The three men from the SD were given detainees from the camp as interpreters, and I and another comrade were assigned to the special commission by the political department. Thus, I was able to observe all the work of this special commission."*

Smoleń relates that this special commission had the task of interrogating each one of the Russian POWs and classifying them into three groups:

- A. "politically unacceptable," a group that included the category "fanatical communist"
- B. "politically unsuspicious"
- C. "suitable for reconstruction"

The witness continued:

*"300 of the POWs were selected for being commissars and particularly important functionaries, and received the remark 'fanatical communist.' These prisoners were immediately taken away from the interrogation room to Block 24a that had been arranged as a Bunker. There, they were received by Oberscharführer Stark who took their old POW tag and replaced it with a new number, running from Au1 through Au300. These 'Au' numbers were tattooed on the left side of their chests, and they were held in complete isolation from the other prisoners of the Russian camp.*

*The activity of the special commission came to an end after a month; as far as I can remember, the distribution of the prisoners into the various categories was approximately as follows:*

Group AU: 300 prisoners  
 Cat. A: 700 prisoners  
 Cat. B: 8,000 prisoners  
 Cat. C: 30 prisoners

*From my work in the political department I know that the 300 prisoners marked 'Au' were executed in smaller groups.*

*The conditions in the Russian camp were so bad that on average 250 prisoners died every day. Until February of 1942, some 8,000 had died or had been executed. The 1,500 remaining were moved to the Birkenau camp.*

*Thus, at Birkenau, there was a Russian camp that was occasionally added to by transports which, however, never contained more than 2,000 prisoners. By the middle of 1942, all but 150 of them had died or been executed."*

At the end of his sworn declaration, Kazimierz Smoleń summarizes the crimes perpetrated by the SS against the Russian prisoners of war at Auschwitz:

*"Summarizing, I wish to say: Living conditions in the Russian POW camp at Auschwitz were considerably worse than in the concentration camp. The Russian POWs were given less and worse food, mainly less bread, were not allowed to write, and were prohibited from using the washrooms. It is obvious that the camp died out within a couple of months. Added to this, there were frequent selections with those unable to work being executed by the hundreds. Both the detainees marked 'Au' and the others to be executed were either shot in the back of the neck or gassed in Block 11."*

This is the only time Kazimierz Smoleń mentions gassings in Block 11, very vague and unspecific, clearly betraying its foundation in hearsay.

Two items in the testimony of Kazimierz Smoleń irrefutably prove the historical unreliability of the account of the first homicidal gassing given by Danuta Czech in the *Auschwitz Kalendarium*.

First, if the gassing had really occurred, Kazimierz Smoleń, in view of the position he held in the political department at Auschwitz at the time, and especially on account of his having been assigned to Mildner's special commission, could not have remained in the dark about it. On the contrary, he would have spoken about it with a wealth of details, as he did when he devoted an entire page of his sworn statement – rendered with the specific aim of denouncing the crimes perpetrated by the SS against the Russian POWs – to a somewhat irrelevant topic such as the process of registering the prisoners.

This witness's ignorance appears even more incredible, if one considers that, according to judge Jan Sehn, the first gassing was allegedly carried



out in accordance with the very decisions arrived at by Mildner's special commission:<sup>242</sup>

*"The first transport of Soviet POWs arrived on October 7, 1941. [...] In November 1941, a special commission, comprising three Gestapo officials led by Dr. Rudolf Mildner, chief of the Katowice Gestapo, arrived in Oświęcim from Katowice. This commission examined the POWs and, in accordance with the order of the RSHA chief dated July 17, 1941, divided them into four groups. For this process, it made use of secret lists containing information about Soviet political and official leaders. The commission decided categorically about the groupings, inclusion in the first two groups amounting to a death sentence. The entire first group – some 300 POWs – was shot in gravel pits or in the yard of Block 11. The execution order was issued by SS-Obersturmführer Seidler, then second Lagerführer.*

*On the initiative of the first Lagerführer, SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Fritsch, the POWs in the second group (some 900), together with those chosen from later drafts, were massacred [sic] by means of cyclon B. Fritsch packed the men into the cellars of Block 11, put on a gasmask, and discharged the poison among them.*

*The whole block had to be aired for two days after this gassing."*

We must remember that Jan Sehn is the judge who questioned the witnesses from whose statements Danuta Czech drew her account of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz. The fact that at the end of 1947 Kazimierz Smoleń did not know anything about this alleged event can only be explained if this event never occurred.

When questioned by me on this point, Kazimierz Smoleń declared through a spokesman:<sup>243</sup>

*"As far as the testimony given for the [American] Nuremberg trial by the former concentration camp detainee Kazimierz Smoleń – as you certainly know – it responded to the specific questions put to him by the tribunal, therefore he could not relate exhaustively and in detail all the events which he had witnessed."*

This justification is not acceptable. Actually, in the sworn statement mentioned, Kazimierz Smoleń did not answer "specific questions" but freely told the story of the Russian prisoners of war at Auschwitz in the years 1941-1942, stressing the crimes committed by the SS against them. The excuse that he had not described the first homicidal gassing because he had

<sup>242</sup> Jan Sehn, *Oświęcim-Brzezinka (Auschwitz-Birkenau) Concentration camp*, Wydawnictwo Prawnice, Warsaw 1961, pp. 96 and 99f.

<sup>243</sup> Letter from the Auschwitz Museum addressed to the author, dated May 4, 1988: "odpowiadał on na konkretne, przez sąd postawione pytania."

not been specifically questioned about it is therefore unfounded. This is confirmed by his vague remark about the prisoners having been “gassed in Block 11.”

Secondly, as “the first Russian transports” arrived at Auschwitz “in early October 1941,” according to his own statement, which is confirmed by Jan Sehn and by existing documents in the archives (see next section), it is not possible that 600 Russian prisoners were gassed there on September 3, 1941.

Furthermore, because, according to judge Jan Sehn, the first gassing was of people sentenced to death by Mildner’s special commission that arrived at Auschwitz “in November of 1941” and finished its work “a month later,” this first gassing could not, in any case, have taken place before December.

Finally, because the number of Soviet prisoners of war selected by this commission and assigned by December to the category “Au,” sentenced to death, was 300, it is all the more impossible that 600 of them were gassed on September 3, 1941.

Kazimierz Smoleń had already been questioned by Jan Sehn on December 10, 1946 in the preparation for the Höss trial. At that time, he described the fate of the Soviet prisoners of war in a very succinct manner, as in the sworn statement we examined earlier, but he attributes to the group “Au” a total of 1,000 prisoners instead of 300, asserting:<sup>244</sup>

*“Some 1,000 were in this first group, and the whole group, diminishing day after day, was shot or gassed in Block 11.”*

On July 30, 1947, Kazimierz Smoleń was questioned in preparation for the trial against the camp garrison at Krakow. He wrote a declaration of six pages on the crimes committed by the political department of Auschwitz, in particular those of Maximilian Grabner. He mentions briefly the “gassing of the detainees in the crematorium,” but does not mention the alleged first gassing in Block 11 with even one single word.<sup>245</sup>

During the 49th session of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, Smoleń, who at that time was the director of the Auschwitz Museum, stated:<sup>246</sup>

*“In the fall of 1941 the Russian prisoners of war arrived. They were in a terrible state. We made cards for them. We made cards of different colors for them. We also assigned numbers to them. The numbers began with 1.*

<sup>244</sup> Deposition of Kazimierz Smoleń dated December 10, 1946. AGK, NTN, 89, Höss trial, Vol. 7, pp. 219f.

<sup>245</sup> Deposition of Kazimierz Smoleń dated July 30, 1947. AGK, NTN, 135, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 53, pp. 192-197.

<sup>246</sup> Fritz Bauer Institut/Staatliches Museum, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 9137f.

*They were tattooed on the chests of the prisoners of war. Then came a commission of the Gestapo office in Katowice. It consisted of four members. They performed selections among the prisoners of war. The prisoners of war were interrogated by this committee and were also beaten. Then they were divided into four groups: a) fanatical communists; b) politically suspect, c) not politically suspect; d) suitable for reconstruction. Group a) contained about 300 people. Group b) consisted of about 600-800 persons. The largest group was that of the politically unsuspicious, and the last group d) was very small, numbering only 20-30 prisoners of war. The 300 fanatical communists were housed mainly in Block 24. Then they were led naked or only in their shirt to be shot in Block 11. I do not know if Stark has taken part in these shootings.*

*I do not know whether Stark participated in gassings. But about three million people were gassed. This figure covers the period until late 1943/early 1944. The Hungarian transports are not included in this figure."*

This confirms that he knew nothing of the first gassing, while his final sentence resembles the Soviet fable of the four million victims.

One of the "comrades" mentioned by Kazimierz Smoleń, who had worked with him in the political department of the camp, was Erwin Bartel. This witness, whom we already met in Chapter III, was questioned by Jan Sehn on August 27, 1947, in connection with the preparation for the trial of the camp garrison. Bartel relates all that he knew about Maximilian Grabner's crimes, often mentioning Block 11:<sup>247</sup>

*"Within a few days, towards the middle of October of 1941, a transport of Russian prisoners of war arrived at the camp, numbering over ten thousand. During the month of November of 1941, some 200 of them, labeled by the Germans as 'politruks,' were selected by the political department on the basis of documents possessed by the political department and were all tattooed with the letters 'Au' followed by a number from 1 to about 200. All those who had been so designated were locked up in a separate cell in Block 24. They died, together with the greater part of the Russians. In February of 1942, hardly 300 survived from the entire transport. [...]*

*The head of the political department, up to the autumn of 1943, was SS-Untersturmführer Grabner. In the police, he had held the rank of Kriminalsekretär and later Oberkriminalsekretär. He was a member of the Sicherheitsdienst and had the letters SD on the sleeve of his uniform. In my presence in our office in the block leaders' room he very calmly signed a letter, which Stark had coolly given to me and on the basis of which several detainees were shot in Block 11. In the spring of 1942, Stark and Palitsch*

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<sup>247</sup> Deposition of Erwin Bartel dated August 27, 1947. AGK, NTN, 135, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 53, pp. 240f.

[sic] carried out an execution by shooting in the yard of Block 11 and mistakenly, because of a similar name, shot a detainee who was not meant to be executed. When they came back from Block 11, Stark was mad and attacked Palitsch, then he came to an agreement with Grabner, who ordered the execution of the prisoner sentenced to death, which Stark then carried out in Block 11. Grabner participated in the shooting of detainees in the gravel pit or in Block 11.”

Just like his colleague Kazimierz Smoleń, Erwin Bartel did not know anything about the first homicidal gassing in Block 11 either, and his declaration of 1959 was obviously a lie created specifically for the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial.

Kazimierz Smoleń’s ignorance in this matter is not surprising. It fully reflects the ignorance of all of his inmate colleagues, such as Erwin Bartel, as well as that of his superiors in the Auschwitz political department, the best-informed unit in the camp.

We have already seen that the staff of this office was unable to provide anything more substantial than conflicting and unverifiable rumors, in particular Maximilian Grabner and Hans Stark, who were Kazimierz Smoleń’s direct superiors and who had personally participated in the alleged gassing, as some witnesses claimed. They had no direct knowledge of this gassing, and that would be unexplainable if this gassing had actually occurred.

Another eminent witness who did not know anything about the first gassing was Hermann Langbein, who later became one of the most famous “historians” on Auschwitz. On August 8, 1945, Langbein wrote an account in Vienna accusing Maximilian Grabner, who was still in Austria at the time and had not yet been extradited to Poland. Langbein, who was interned at Auschwitz from August 21, 1941, until August 25, 1944, (ID 60355) made a declaration of more than 150 lines of text accusing Grabner, but did not have a single word to say about the first homicidal gassing, which Grabner is claimed to have organized. Instead, Langbein stated the following:<sup>248</sup>

*“Of course, Grabner was present when the transports that came to Auschwitz underwent mass gassings. In the course of these transports, some 5,000,000 people were gassed. Grabner was present as well at the mass liquidations of Russians (1,200,000<sup>[249]</sup> were murdered in the first winter alone).”*

An auspicious beginning for a future historian on Auschwitz!

<sup>248</sup> Deposition by Hermann Langbein, Vienna, August 8, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 22.

<sup>249</sup> In the transcription attached to the documents of the camp garrison trial, this figure reads “12,000.” APMO, Dpr.-/ZOd/78, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 53, p. 36.

## 2. Documents

In the first German edition of the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, the arrival of the first transport of Soviet prisoners of war at the camp is entered under the month of July 1941 (the day of the month is not indicated) in the following terms:<sup>250</sup>

*“Several hundred Soviet prisoners of war were brought into the camp and housed in Block 11. These prisoners work in the gravel pit (moving out sand). Within a few days, the whole group was murdered while they were working by being shot with a short barrel, small caliber weapon or with shovels and hoes.”*

The historicity of this event is not based on any documents, but only on two testimonies, which Jerzy Brandhuber quotes as follows:<sup>251</sup>

*“In accordance with a statement by the former detainee Ludwik R. (H.[öss] tr[ial], vol. 4, pp. 53-58) and Bogdan G. (trial of the members of the camp garrison at the Auschwitz camp..., vol. 54, p. 207)”*

In the second German edition of the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, Danuta Czech has the same references under July 18, 1941, but without the names of the witnesses:<sup>252</sup>

*“Höss trial, vol. 4, pp. 53-58; Krakow Auschwitz trial, vol. 54, p. 207.”*

The witnesses in question are Ludwik Rajewski and Bogdan Gliński. The first declared in this respect:<sup>253</sup>

*“To the same fate, over 10,000 Russian prisoners of war were sent to the Auschwitz camp. They came to Auschwitz in the autumn of 1941 and were murdered there within the span of five months over the end of the year 1941 and early 1942. The first lot was murdered within three days in the gravel pit near the block leaders’ room of the Main Camp.”*

The witness Gliński made the following declaration:<sup>254</sup>

*“Not only I myself but other detainees as well remember well the following occurrence: a few weeks after the beginning of the German-Russian war the first large transport of Russian prisoners of war arrived at Auschwitz as a group of several hundred persons. These prisoners were housed in Block 11 and went to work every day, digging sand from a large pit – the*

<sup>250</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 21), p. 106.

<sup>251</sup> Jerzy Brandhuber, *op. cit.* (note 228), p. 16, note 39.

<sup>252</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 104.

<sup>253</sup> Deposition of Ludwik Rajewski, September 7, 1946. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-Hd/4, Höss trial, Vol. 4, p. 56.

<sup>254</sup> Deposition of Bogdan Gliński, September 19, 1947. APMO, Dpr.-ZOd/54b, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 54b, p. 212.



*Kiesgrube – which was located behind the camp kitchen, on the other side of the fence. Within a few consecutive days the entire group was killed in the most ferocious and shameful way.”*

As the German attack on the Soviet Union took place on June 22, 1941, the chronological indication furnished by the witness (“a few weeks after”) places the event most likely in the month of July, but it is unclear how Danuta Czech was able to glean from this general statement that the exact date was July 18, quite apart from the fact that the two statements are chronologically contradictory.

The truth regarding this event was revealed by another witness, Kazimierz Hałas.<sup>255</sup>

*“On July 3rd, also in the gravel pit, there was a major execution of some 70 detainees, mostly from Krakow, the last one for which an execution detail was used.*

*At that time there were as yet no Soviet prisoners of war in the Auschwitz camp. Reports about transports of Soviet POWs in July of 1941, claimed to have been integrated into the penal company (SK) and then killed without having been registered (numbered), cannot be proved in the light of the events at Auschwitz. Apparently we have here a confusion with the facts just mentioned.”*

This confirms – if anyone still needed to be convinced – that historical events cannot be reconstructed solely based on testimony, and in the specific case of the first homicidal gassing there is no doubt that the testimonies absolutely do not demonstrate the historicity of the alleged event. Hence, one cannot but examine the available documents.

At the State Museum of Auschwitz various documents relating to Soviet prisoners of war are being preserved. There are two that directly concern the topic of this chapter: the card file and the *Totenbuch* (book of deaths).

The card file contains 7,641 yellow cards, 14.7 by 10.5 cm, which run from “Gef[angener]. Nr. 2” (prisoner no. 2) through 9,997. The first 60 cards show the date October 6, 1941.<sup>256</sup>

This book of deaths has 470 pages; it contains the names of 8,320 Soviet prisoners who died within a span of 144 days. The first entry was made on October 7, 1941.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>255</sup> Kazimierz Hałas, “Die Arbeit im ‘Revier’ für sowjetische Kriegsgefangene in Auschwitz. Ein Bericht,” in: *Die Auschwitz-Hefte*. Vol. I, p. 167.

<sup>256</sup> Jerzy Brandhuber, *op. cit.* (note 228), p. 35. Cf. Documents 8f..

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32. Cf. Document 10.

In the sworn statement already mentioned, Kazimierz Smoleń asserts that “in early October the first transports of Russians arrived at Auschwitz.” This agrees with the above documents, and it is otherwise evident that sending these transports to Auschwitz was ordered in conformity with the “directives for the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war in all POW camps” sent out on September 8, 1941, by the Wehrmacht Supreme Command. These dispositions specified that military and civilian Russians were to be identified in the POW camps and assigned to the following three groups:

- a) politically undesirable
- b) politically not dangerous
- c) politically especially trustworthy

The decision as to the identity of the “politically undesirable” elements was made by the *Einsatzgruppen* of the *Sicherheitspolizei* and the SD.<sup>258</sup> These dispositions were based on the directive of July 17, 1941 (*Einsatzbefehl Nr. 8*), concerning the deployment of units of the Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service (*Kommando des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*) in the PoW camps. Those units had been given authority to survey all the detainees of the camp, including

*“the selection and further treatment*

- a) of unacceptable elements among these [persons] for political, criminal, or other reasons, and*
- b) of those persons who can be used for the reconstruction of the occupied territories.”*

Each week the heads of the *Einsatzkommandos* had to send a report to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), which then, on the basis of these reports, specified the measures to be adopted, one of them being execution.<sup>259</sup>

According to the dispositions cited, the Soviet POWs had to undergo a survey to separate – and judge – the politically dangerous elements from those who might become collaborationists. If we follow Kazimierz Smoleń, the commission that came to Auschwitz in November of 1941 had exactly this task. This is accepted even by Danuta Czech, who writes in an

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<sup>258</sup> Text in: Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Helmut Krausnik, *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich 1982, Vol. 2, pp. 218-220.

<sup>259</sup> PS-502.

entry for November 1941 (no date indicated), with specific reference to the statements by Kazimierz Smoleń:<sup>260</sup>

*“A Gestapo special commission comes to concentration camp Auschwitz. It consists of three persons and is headed by Dr. Mildner, chief of the Kattowitz Gestapo. The commission, which acts in accordance with Einsatzbefehl No. 8 dated July 17, splits the Russian prisoners of war into the following groups*

- 1) Fanatical communist: about 300 POWs*
- 2) Group A: politically doubtful: about 700 POWs*
- 3) Group B: politically trustworthy: 8,000 POWs*
- 4) Group C: suitable for reconstruction: about 30 POWs*

*The group of so-called fanatical communists is marked with the letters ‘Au’ in the card file and the tattoo. The prisoners of this group are housed in the cellars of Block 24 and, together with those of Group A, the ‘politically doubtful’ cases, they are to be liquidated shortly. The commission is active for about a month.”*

The Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps was also involved in the matter, being always on the lookout for manpower. On November 15, 1941, SS-Brigadeführer Richard Glücks sent a secret order to the concentration camps that specified the following:<sup>261</sup>

*“The Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police has given his approval that execution will be deferred for those Russian POWs who, though sent to the concentration camps (commissars in particular) for execution, are in a physical shape such that they can be made to work in a quarry. For this measure [to be applied], approval from the Chief of the Security Police and the SD must be secured in advance.*

*Specifically, the following is ordered:*

*When execution transports arrive at the camps, the able-bodied Russians suitable for quarry work will be selected by the leader of the protective custody camp (E)<sup>[262]</sup> and the camp surgeon. A list of names of the Russians thus selected is to be submitted in duplicate to this office.*

*The camp surgeon must certify that no medical objection exists against the person concerned doing the work.*

*After approval by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD, transfer of the Russian concerned into a quarry camp will be ordered by this office.”*

<sup>260</sup> D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 137.

<sup>261</sup> GARF, 7021-108-47, p. 5 ; Cf. Document 11.

<sup>262</sup> E = *Erziehungshäftlinge*, detainees in preventive custody for re-education.

Two days later, on November 17, Maximilian Grabner, head of the political department at Auschwitz, sent the following letter to Fritzsche, the leader of the Auschwitz Protective Custody Camp (E):<sup>263</sup>

*“On the basis of the decree below, the names of the Russians exempted from execution are to be made known to this office. We also ask you to inform us of those who fall under the order below, as lists of them have to be sent to the IKL and the Chief of the Security Police. In this respect, cooperation with the camp surgeon of this camp is mandatory.*

*The persons concerned are the Russians listed in the annex<sup>[264]</sup> and the Russ[ian]. prisoners of war selected by the Sonderkommando for execution last week.”*

The “*Sonderkommando*” mentioned by Grabner was Mildner’s commission, which had drawn up a first list of Soviet POWs to be executed as early as mid-November. It is therefore obvious that the first executions cannot have taken place before November 17.

On October 23, 1941, SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Arthur Liebehenschel, representing the *Inspekteur der Konzentrationslager* (IKL, Inspector of the Concentration Camps), sent a letter to all camps, including Auschwitz, on the subject of “written notifications about Soviet-Russian POWs.”<sup>265</sup> It specified the procedures of registration and notification of death to be used for the Soviet POWs, later described by Kazimierz Smoleń.

The documents available thus confirm that the first Soviet prisoners of war reached Auschwitz on October 6, 1941, and the first mass executions of these prisoners began more than a month later.

As far as detainees are concerned, there are three documents that directly concern the subject of this study:

1. the “*Bunkerbuch*” (Bunker register) for Block 11;
2. the register of the detainee sickbay in Block 28 – Block 20 of the old numbering system;
3. the “*Sterbebuch*” (register of deaths)

The “*Bunkerbuch*” does not provide us with any information regarding the alleged homicidal gassing of September 3-5, 1941. On September 5, three detainees are registered as having entered: Fritz Renner (ID 11179), Bruno Grosmann (ID 15083), and Roman Drost (ID 10992). They die on the same day (in the register of the Bunker, next to their names, there is the note “*ver.*” [*storben*] = deceased). On September 5, the civilian Ładysław Maś-

<sup>263</sup> GARF, 7021-108-47, p. 5a ; Cf. Document 12.

<sup>264</sup> This document has not been found.

<sup>265</sup> AGK, NTN, 119, pp. 60f.

lak, who had entered the Bunker on August 10, is also entered as having died.<sup>266</sup> The cause of death is not indicated for these four detainees.

In his article on the first gassing at Auschwitz that has been cited a number of times, Stanisław Kłodziński states:<sup>267</sup>

*“Dr. Tadeusz Iwaszko of the Auschwitz National Museum writes in a letter dated November 3, 1969, that in the register of Block 20 [according to the old numbering system], which has been preserved, there are significant entries for the period of the gassing. On September 5 and 10, 1941, a large number of detainees were struck out from the number of patients in Block 20. This raised the suspicion – in conformity also with the assertions of Dr. Kazimierz Hałgas, Roman Taul, and the detainees employed in the central ‘writing room’ of the camp – that the detainees gassed were ‘struck out from the number’ of the patients in small groups over a certain period of time. This means that these detainees, in spite of having been gassed, ‘were held’ alive for a while longer in the sickbay’s register and that, little by little death notices were sent to the families on various dates.”*

The register of Block 28 does contain the names of 95 detainees “released to the camp” on September 5, 1941, of three released on September 6, of one released on September 7, and of 36 detainees released on September 10,<sup>268</sup> a total of 135 detainees. If these detainees had really been gassed between September 3 and 4, 1941, their names would have to be contained in the register of deaths as having occurred on those dates.

The first of these registers, the “*Sterbebuch*” of 1941, volume one,<sup>269</sup> contains the death certificates of 1,498 detainees numbered in sequence. Between September 1st and 10, we have 502 death certificates of detainees deceased between July 29 and September 8.<sup>270</sup> For the first week of September we have 219 deceased detainees distributed in the following way:

Date	Number	Date	Number	Date	Number
1	19	4	37	7	29
2	41	5	29	8	1
3	31	6	32	Total:	219

<sup>266</sup> *Bunkerbuch*. APMO, sygn. D-AuI-3/1, p. 24. Cf. Document 13.

<sup>267</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), pp. 92f.

<sup>268</sup> Register of *Häftlingskrankenbau* in Block 28. APMO, sygn. D-AuI-5/2, pp. 4-17. Cf. Document 14.

<sup>269</sup> APMO, sygn. D-AuI-D/I, No. inv.171824.

<sup>270</sup> The first certificate, dated August 4, refers to detainee Peter Pakosch who died on July 29, the last one, dated September 10, concerns the detainee Stefan Majchrzak who died on September 7, 1941. The last registration number, 1498, was assigned to the detainee Stanisław Pinis who died on September 8.



Among these detainees we should be able to find the 135 detainees released from the sickbay at Block 28 and assumed gassed. If we compare the two registers, we find, however, that only 14<sup>271</sup> of the 135 names of detainees released from the sickbay are in the “*Sterbebuch*,” see Table 3:

**Table 3:** Dead inmates released from sickbay of Block 28 registered in the *Sterbebuch*

Last name	First name	ID	Date of death	Block 28 no.
Matula	Eugeniusz	11865	6 September	91
Najda	Stanisław	13866	6 September	96
Jop	Piotr	17651	6 September	97
Przepiora	Kazimierz	18219	6 September	98
Sawaszkiwicz	Zygmunt	13621	6 September	95
Wiencek	Tadeusz	8213	6 September	94
Kucharski	Edward	17804	6 September	93
Ciesielski	Kazimierz	2387	7 September	87
Turno	Edward	15807	7 September	88
Cebo	Antoni	10993	7 September	89
Miecznikowski	Piotr	11980	7 September	80
Janakiewicz	Jan	12250	7 September	82
Byra	Antoni	14238	7 September	83
Korzeniewski	Stanisław	1933	7 September	118

The suspicion raised by Stanisław Kłodziński in his article just cited therefore does not appear to be justified. Uncertainties arise, though, as the comparison of the registers is necessarily based on names only, *i.e.* there may be prisoners with identical names, because the *Sterbebücher* do not carry the ID numbers of the deceased detainees. The *Leichenhallenbuch*, instead, is based on ID numbers, which allows the detainees to be precisely identified. This does not, however, invalidate the procedure of comparing entries with those in the *Sterbebücher*, because if the 135 detainees released from the sickbay between September 5 and 10 had been gassed in the beginning of that month, their names would have come up at least once in the respective *Sterbebuch* anyway.

Instead, among the 128 names of detainees who died between September 4 (the “certain” date of death of those gassed) and September 8, there

<sup>271</sup> As opposed to the Italian edition, this list does not contain the name of Stanisław Nowak (ID 12430, released from the hospital in Block 28 on September 10), to whom I had assigned the date of death of September 3, because in the existing *Sterbebücher* there are 12 persons by the name of Stanisław Nowak. As only general data, without the ID number, are reported in these registers, it is impossible to ascertain which Stanisław Nowak was detainee No. 12430.

are only 14 names identical to the names of those released from the sickbay. Although it is highly likely that they are the same persons, it is not certain. Moreover, even if this can be demonstrated beyond doubt, there is no proof that the 14 detainees in question were killed – let alone gassed.

It is not possible to undertake a comparison between those released from the sickbay at Block 28 and the detainees deceased during the rest of the month, because *Sterbebuch* No. 1 ends on September 10, 1941, *Sterbebuch* No. 2 is lost, and *Sterbebuch* No. 3 starts on October 21, 1941 (death certificate No. 3001 for Jan Krasicki, who died on October 18).<sup>272</sup> But the *Leichenhallenbuch* (register of the deceased in the mortuary of Block 28), which begins with October 7, 1941,<sup>273</sup> partially makes up for the missing *Sterbebuch* No. 2 as far as the period October 7 through 17<sup>274</sup> is concerned. It thus documents in an irrefutable manner the death at much later dates of 13 detainees released between September 5 and 10 from the sickbay of Block 28, see Table 4.

**Table 4:** Dead inmates released from sickbay of Block 28 and registered in the *Leichenhallenbuch*

Last name	First name	ID	Date of death	<i>Leichenhallenbuch</i>		Block 28 no.
				Page	Entry no.	
Remiczewski	Edmund	12556	Oct. 9	3	6	40
Owczarz	Taddäus	17017	Oct. 9	3	9	134
Zukowski	Nikolaus	19669	Oct. 10	4	17	25
Kowalczyk	Teofil	18964	Oct. 12	7	12	17
Kozłowski	Peter	12298	Oct. 13	8	14	139
Larsata	Stanisław	6434	Oct. 16	11	3	114
Kowalczyj	Januarius	12367	Oct. 18	14	9	123
Slericki	Ludwig	18618	Oct. 18	14	34	33
Chajnicki	Andreas	18256	Oct. 20	17	16	138
Marusek	Johann	19830	Oct. 23	22	20	140
Pios	Ignatz	19830	Oct. 23	22	20	35
Wierzłowski	Johann	14005	Oct. 25	25	3	20
Ruski	Gustav	17231	Oct. 27	28	17	6

At least five detainees with identical names are registered in the *Bunkerbuch* at later dates: Borkowski, Johann; Drozd, Stanislaus; Kluzniak, Kasi-mir; Masdorf, Johann; Rutkowski, Stefan.<sup>275</sup> Moreover, in the surviving *Sterbebücher* we find the names of the detainees listed in Table 5:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>272</sup> *Sterbebuch*, Vol. 3/1941. APMO, D-AuI-2/2, p. 1.

<sup>273</sup> *Leichenhallenbuch*, APMO, sygn. D-AuI-5/3.

<sup>274</sup> The period of September 8 through October 6 remains unaccounted for.

<sup>275</sup> Franciszek Brol et al., *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 69-85.

**Table 5:** Dead inmates released from sickbay of Block 28 registered later in a *Sterbebuch*

Last name	First name	Block 28 no.	Date of death
Ciesielski	Marian	87	June 17, 1942
Dabala	Josef	124	March 4, 1942
Dzieciol	Albert	110	March 14, 1942
Heinrich	Aleksander	137	May 22, 1942
Jakubowski	Wiktor	49	Feb. 22, 1943
Janus	Ferdynand	122	April 15, 1942
Jedrzejczy	Stanislaw	51	May 26, 1942
Jelonek	Jakob	112	Nov. 14, 1941
Klein	Stanislaw	34	Nov. 19, 1941
Kluzniak	Kazimierz	126	May 25, 1942
Krol	Mieczyslaw	125	April 22, 1942
Kozlowski	Piotr	139	March 18, 1942
Marczynski	Mieczyslaw	115	March 15, 1942
Merker	Viktor	44	March 4, 1942
Mosdorf	Jan	119	Oct. 19, 1943
Polak	Edmund	18	May 5, 1943
Skrzetuski	Jan	109	Nov. 3, 1941
Smorongiewicz	Michal	133	April 5, 1942
Stasiak	Stefan	69	March 7, 1943
Szewcyk	Josef	105	March 2, 1943

For detainee Mieczyslaw Krol, the date of birth gives certainty that he is the detainee of the same name released from the Block 28 sickbay.<sup>276</sup> For the others, there is the same degree of probability for their identity with inmates of the same name released from the infirmary of Block 28 as for the 14 detainees of the first list.

According to the witness Wladysław Tondos, 180 sick detainees were selected in Block 28 at the beginning of September 1941 for gassing in the Bunker of Block 11.<sup>277</sup> Hence the victims of the first homicidal gassing would have been the 182 detainees released between September 5 and 17, who would then have been maintained on the sickbay list for another 12 days in an effort to cover up their assassination.

However, out of the 47 detainees released from the Block 28 sickbay between September 11 and 17, seven died during the month of October, as is evidenced by the *Leichenhallenbuch*, see Table 6 (p. 129).

<sup>276</sup> Irena Strzelecka, "Die ersten Polen im KL Auschwitz," *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Verlag Staatliches Auschwitz-Museum, Vol. 18, 1990, p. 95.

<sup>277</sup> S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 84.

**Table 6:** Dead inmates released from sickbay of Block 28, registered later in the *Leichenhallenbuch*

Last name	First name	ID	Date of death	<i>Leichenhallenbuch</i>		Block 28 no.
				Page	Entry no.	
Grzybowski	Stanislaus	18419	Oct. 20	17	15	172
Kulczycki	Ceslaus	16443	Oct. 13	8	10	165
Mateski	Ladislaus	12721	Oct. 16	11	13	184
Pokorzewski	Ladislaus	8200	Oct. 9	3	23	161
Szwarczawski	Josef	18637	Oct. 17	13	6	167
Tomozyk	Johann	10909	Oct. 9	3	3	186
Zimmol	Paul	15092	Oct. 7	1	10	152

In the *Sterbebücher* there are another three detainees with identical names who died in November of 1941 (Wieczorek, Stanislaus; Burel, Thaddeus; Jewtuck, Joseph) and another four who died between February and May of 1942 (Dakowicz, Anton; Kaczmariski, Stephan; Kepinski, Stanislaus; Koza, Kasimir).

That this group can under no circumstance have been part of those allegedly gassed results from the fact that one of its potential victims, Bogdan Gliński (ID 11958), who was released from the sickbay of Block 28 on September 13, is one of the self-declared eyewitnesses of the first homicidal gassing! For in his deposition of September 19, 1947, Gliński stated that he saw the arrival of the Russian POWs destined to be gassed from sickbay Block 21 (new numbering), which was close to Block 11. He asserted that he had fallen ill with pneumonia in June of 1941 and also had a boil on his right thigh. For that reason he was housed in the detainee sickbay in Blocks 28, 21, and 19, where he was cured by August 1941 and then worked in those blocks as a janitor. He then contracted typhus in the winter of 1941.

Although he claims to have been in Block 21 “as a patient”<sup>278</sup> in early September 1941, he was actually dismissed not from Block 21 but from Block 28, where he was housed as a patient. On the register of Block 28, there is no record of the billeting dates of the detainees. It appears certain, nonetheless, that in early September Bogdan Gliński was in Block 28, not in Block 21.

If what he says were true, then sick as he was he would have miraculously escaped the September 3 selection for the gassing, but would have been recruited the next day (three days later according to his own chronol-

<sup>278</sup> Deposition of Bogdan Gliński, September 19, 1947. APMO, sygn. Dpr.-ZOd/55, trial of the camp garrison, Vol. 55, p. 210.

ogy) to carry out the extremely strenuous work of removing the corpses of the gassed from the Bunker in Block 11 and taking them to the crematorium, after which he would have been hospitalized again, this time in Block 28, to be finally released on September 13.

It is therefore clear why the witness did not mention in his deposition that he had been billeted in Block 28. Furthermore, according to witness Władysław Tondos, he would have been selected to be gassed along with the 47 detainees officially registered as released some time up to September 17 (allegedly with a post-dated entry). Bogdan Gliński's testimony is therefore unreliable and shines a light on the value of testimonies of this type.

### 3. Chemical Considerations

In 1990, in response to the *Leuchter Report*, the Auschwitz Museum had the “Instytut Ekspertyz Sądowych Jan Sehn” (Jan Sehn Institute for Forensic Testing) at Krakow carry out chemical tests for the cyanide content of a number of masonry samples gathered from various points of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps.<sup>279</sup>

In the corresponding study, dated September 24, 1990, Jan Markiewicz, Wojciech Gubała, and Jerzy Łabędź analyzed “samples of wall plaster from Block 11 at Auschwitz,” which did not show any presence of cyanides.<sup>280</sup>

The analysis for merely soluble cyanides<sup>281</sup> entrusted in 1994 to the same institute by the Auschwitz Museum concerned *i.a.* nine samples of

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<sup>279</sup> On contact with iron oxides contained in some building materials (mortar and brick), hydrogen cyanide (HCN) forms soluble as well as an insoluble cyanides – ferrocyanides and finally Iron Blue or Prussian Blue (Berlin Blue):  $\text{Fe}_4([\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]_3)$ . The stability of this compound is basically equal to that of the material in which it forms (Germar Rudolf, *op. cit.* (note 58), pp. 147-177). Even today, at Birkenau, these insoluble iron cyanide pigments, recognizable by their intensive blue color, can be observed on vast surfaces of brickwork areas, both internal and external, of the disinfestation installations of BW5a and b, where hydrogen cyanide was employed.

<sup>280</sup> Instytut Ekspertyz Sądowych im. Prof. dr Jana Sehna w Krakowie. Zakład Chemiczno-Toksykologii Sądowej, Krakow, September 24, 1990. APMO, L dz. I-8523/51/1860/89. See Institute for Historical Review, “An official Polish report on the Auschwitz ‘gas chambers,’” *Journal of Historical Review*, 11(2) (1991), pp. 207-216.

<sup>281</sup> Since only insoluble cyanides can be expected to have survived the ravages of time, testing merely for soluble cyanides, hence excluding from the outset that which could only be present, is a flawed method; see G. Rudolf, *op. cit.* (note 58), pp. 256-259.



plaster taken from the Bunker of Block 11 and yielded the following results:<sup>282</sup>

**Table 7:** Cyanide residues in masonry samples taken from the Bunker

Sample number, taken from cells of Block 11	CN <sup>-</sup> concentration [µg/kg]
13	28, 24, 24
14	20, 16, 16
15	0

The scale is in micrograms, *i.e.* millionths of grams. Therefore, the highest value (sample 13) corresponds to 28 millionths of a gram per kilogram of substance.

Markiewicz, Gubała, and Łabędź took nine more samples “from dwelling accommodations, which were probably fumigated with Zyklon B only once (in connection with typhoid epidemic in 1942),” the analysis of which showed no presence of cyanides.<sup>283</sup> However, samples taken by Germar Rudolf<sup>284</sup> in barracks 3, 13, and 20 of construction section Ia at Birkenau showed a maximum concentration of 2.7 milligrams (2,700 micrograms) per kilogram.

In practice, the cyanide values found in two of three samples taken from the cells of Bunker 11 do not prove anything, one way or the other, because they are so low that they can be made to fit either one of the hypotheses. Therefore, the final judgment concerning the reality of the first homicidal gassing depends on the critical historical and comparative analysis of the sources.

<sup>282</sup> Jan Markiewicz, Wojciech Gubała, Jerzy Łabędź, “A Study of the Cyanide Compounds Content in the Wall of the Gas Chambers in the Former Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps,” *Z Zagadnień Nauk Sądowych* (Problems of Forensic Science), Vol. 30, 1994, pp. 19-27.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>284</sup> G. Rudolf, *op. cit.* (note 58), pp. 239f.



## Conclusion

The conclusion that emerges from the analyses of the available sources we have examined in this study is unambiguous: The first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz in the official reconstruction by Danuta Czech is based solely on contradictory statements of self-styled eyewitnesses and is discounted by the documents. It therefore has no historical foundation.

The story was invented in October of 1941 by one of the centers for black propaganda within the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz, from the initial idea of an experimentation with undefined combat gases on human beings in an equally undefined “Bunker” or “shelter” or “concrete building” at Auschwitz. Only later, cued by the disinfestations with Zyklon B that became more and more widespread with the enlargement of the camp,<sup>285</sup> did the propagandists introduce Zyklon B into their tales and place the first gassing in the basement of Block 11. The normal removal of corpses of registered detainees who had died in the camp from the *Leichenhalle* of Block 28 to the crematorium was used to progressively enrich the story.

In 1946, Judge Jan Sehn, facing the task of historicizing the utterly contradictory accounts of the witnesses to enable judicial proceedings to be launched, invented the nucleus of the story, which included the canonical literary elements of the number of victims, the various phases of the gassing, but not its date. In 1959, Danuta Czech, in an even more daring manipulation of the sources, resurrected and augmented Jan Sehn’s story and drew from a mélange of diverging testimonies a purely fictitious “convergence of proof” and attributed to it a precise but completely invented date.: The first gassing had now become “history.”

This “history” reveals the deceitful tricks used by the inventors of the legend of the first gassing at Auschwitz. It also speaks volumes about the

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<sup>285</sup> One of the first gassing operations for purposes of disinfestation was carried out between July 7 and 12, 1941, in Block 16 (= 21 according to the new numbering system): the detainees of this Block were temporarily housed in Block 14 (= 19) “wegen Vergasung von Block 16” (because of gassing of Block 16). RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 28.

intellectual laziness of the orthodox Holocaust historians who uncritically accepted this legend and transmogrified it into an “untouchable historical truth.”

## Appendix

## Documents

Vanille. Morcheln. Tabellen über die Giftwirkung von Gasen und Dämpfen. 453

Tabelle über die Wirksamkeit giftiger Gase und Dämpfe beim Menschen. (Nach LEHMANN, HESS und ZANGGER<sup>1</sup>.)

	Sofort tödlich		In 1/4–1 Stunde sofort oder später tödlich		In 1/2–1 Stunde lebensgefährliche Erkrankung (Hess)		In 1/2–1 Stunde erträglich ohne sofortige oder spätere Folgen		Bei mehrstündiger Einwirkung bereits wirksam (Hess)		6 Stunden ohne wesentliche Symptome ertragen	
	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa	mg/l	Teile in 1 Million (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> ) etwa
Chlor . . . . .	2,5	900	0,1–0,15	35–50	0,04–0,06	14–20	0,01	3,5	0,001	0,35	0,003 bis 0,005	1–2
Brom . . . . .	5,5	850	0,22	35	0,04–0,06	6–9	0,022	3,5	0,001	0,15	0,005	0,75
Chlorwasserstoff . . . . .	—	—	1,8–2,6	1200 bis 1750	1,5–2,0	1000 bis 1350	0,06–0,13	40–90	0,01	7,0	0,013	9,0
Schwefelwasserstoff . . . . .	1,2–2,8	860–2000	0,6–0,84	430–600	0,5–0,7	360–500	0,24–0,36	170–260	0,1–0,15	70–110	0,12–0,18	86–130
Schwefeldioxyd . . . . .	—	—	1,4–1,7	530–650	0,4–0,5	150–190	0,17–0,64	65–245	0,02–0,03	8–12	0,06–0,1	25–40
Ammoniak . . . . .	—	—	1,5–2,7	2150 bis 3900	2,5–4,5	3600 bis 6500	0,18	260	0,1	140	0,06	85
Nitrose Gase . . . . .	—	—	0,6–1,0	320–530	—	—	0,2–0,4	105–210	—	—	(0,2)	105
Phosphorwasserstoff . . . . .	—	—	0,56–0,84	400–600	0,4–0,6	300–450	0,14–0,26	100–200	0,1	7	—	—
Arsenwasserstoff . . . . .	5,0	1550	0,05	15	0,02	6	0,02	6	0,01	3	0,01 (?)	3
Kohlenoxyd . . . . .	—	—	2–3	1800 bis 2600	2–3	1800 bis 2600	0,5–1,0	450–900	0,2	180	0,1	90
Kohlendioxyd . . . . .	360	200000	90–120	50000 bis 67000	60–80	33500 bis 44500	60–70	33500 bis 39000	20–30	11000 bis 17000	10	5500
Phosgen . . . . .	—	—	0,02–0,1	5–25	0,05	12,5	—	2500 bis 5000 <sup>2</sup>	5–10	1250 bis 2500 <sup>2</sup>	10	2500
Benzin . . . . .	—	—	30–40	7500 bis 10000 <sup>2</sup>	25–30	6250 bis 7500 <sup>2</sup>	10–20	3000	5–10	1500 bis 3000	5–10	1500 bis 3000
Benzol . . . . .	—	—	20–30	6000 bis 9000	—	—	10	6150 bis 8200	—	—	20–30	4100 bis 6150
Chloroform . . . . .	—	—	200	41000	—	—	30–40	—	—	—	—	—
Tetrachlor- kohlenstoff . . . . .	—	—	400–500	64000 bis 80000	150–200	24000 bis 32000	60–80	9500 bis 13000	10	1600	—	—
Schwefelkohlenstoff . . . . .	—	—	15	4800	10–12	3200 bis 3900	3–5	1000 bis 1600	1–1,2	320–400	—	—
Blausäure . . . . .	0,3	270	0,12–0,15	110–135	0,12	0,15	0,05	45–55	0,02	0,04	0,02 (0,04)	20–(35)
Nitrobenzol . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,0–1,5	200–300	—	—	0,3–0,5	60–100
Anilin . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	0,5	130	—	—	0,15–0,2	40–55

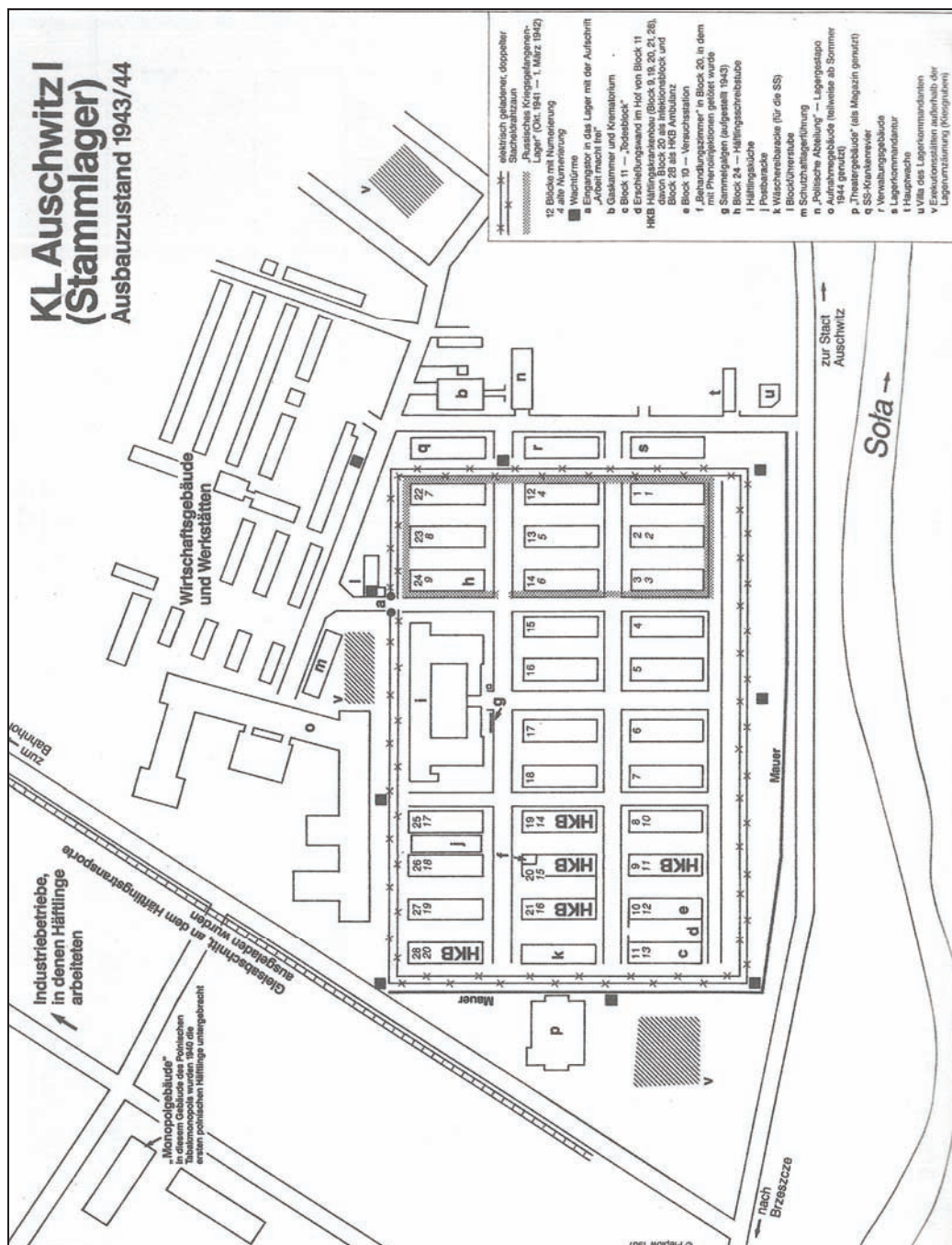
**Doc. 1:** Table showing the effect of various toxic gasses and vapors on human beings. Ferdinand Flury, Franz Zernik, *Schädliche Gase, Dämpfe, Nebel, Rauch- und Staubarten*. Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin 1931, p. 453.



**Tabelle über die ungefähre Wirksamkeit von Gasen und Dämpfen beim Menschen.**  
(Anschließend an Angaben von K.B. LEHMANN und HENDERSON-HAGGARD  
auf Grund eigener Versuche ergänzt und abgeändert<sup>1</sup>.)

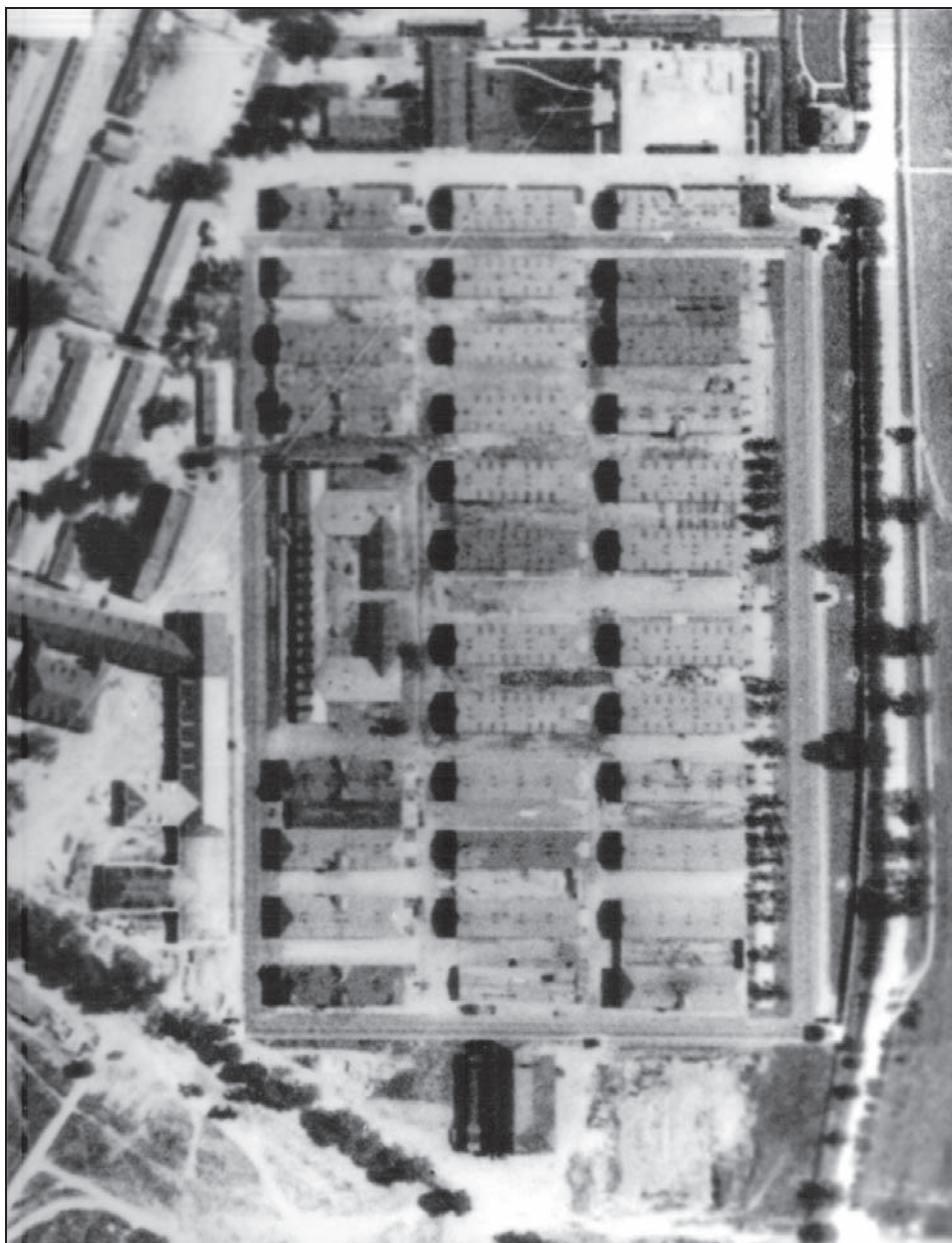
Stoff	Tödlieh 5—10 Minuten lang eingeatmet		Gefährlich (toxisch) 1/5—1 Stunde lang eingeatmet		Erträglich 1/5—1 Stunde lang eingeatmet	
	Teile Dampf oder Gas in 1 Million Teilen Luft (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> )	mg/l etwa	Teile Dampf oder Gas in 1 Million Teilen L. ft (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> )	mg/l etwa	Teile Dampf oder Gas in 1 Million Teilen Luft (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>3</sup> )	mg/l etwa
Phosgen . . . . .	50	0,2	25	0,1	1	0,004
Chlor . . . . .	500	0,7	50	0,07	5	0,007
Arsenwasserstoff . . . . .	300	1,0	60	0,2	20	0,06
Blausäure . . . . .	200	0,2	100	0,1	50	0,05
Nitrose . . . . .	500	1,0	100	0,2	50	0,1
Schwefelwasserstoff . . . . .	800	1,2	400	0,6	200	0,3
Phosphorwasserstoff . . . . .	1000	1,4	400	0,6	100	0,15
Schwefelkohlenstoff . . . . .	2000	6,0	1000	3,0	500	1,5
Schwefeldioxyd . . . . .	3000	8,0	400	1,2	100	0,3
Chlorwasserstoff . . . . .	3000	4,5	1000	1,5	100	0,15
Ammoniak . . . . .	5000	3,0	2500	1,5	250	0,15
Kohlenoxyd . . . . .	5000	6,0	2000	2,4	1000	1,2
Benzol . . . . .	20000	65	7500	25	3000	10
Chloroform . . . . .	25000	125	15000	75	5000	25
Benzin (Gasolin) . . . . .	30000	120 <sup>2</sup>	20000	80 <sup>2</sup>	15000	60 <sup>2</sup>
Tetrachlorkohlenstoff . . . . .	50000	350	25000	175	10000	70
Kohlendioxyd . . . . .	90000	165	50000	90	30000	55
Acetylen . . . . .	500000	550	250000	275	100000	110
Äthylen (mit Sauerstoff) . . . . .	950000	1100	800000	920	500000	575

**Doc. 2:** Table showing the effect of various toxic gasses and vapors on human beings.  
Ferdinand Flury, Franz Zernik, *Schädliche Gase, Dämpfe, Nebel, Rauch- und Staub-  
arten*. Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin 1931, p. 454.



**Doc. 3:** Plan of the Auschwitz camp (1943-1944). *Die Auschwitz-Hefte*, Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (ed.). Beltz-Verlag, Weinheim/Basel 1987, vol. 2, p. 273.



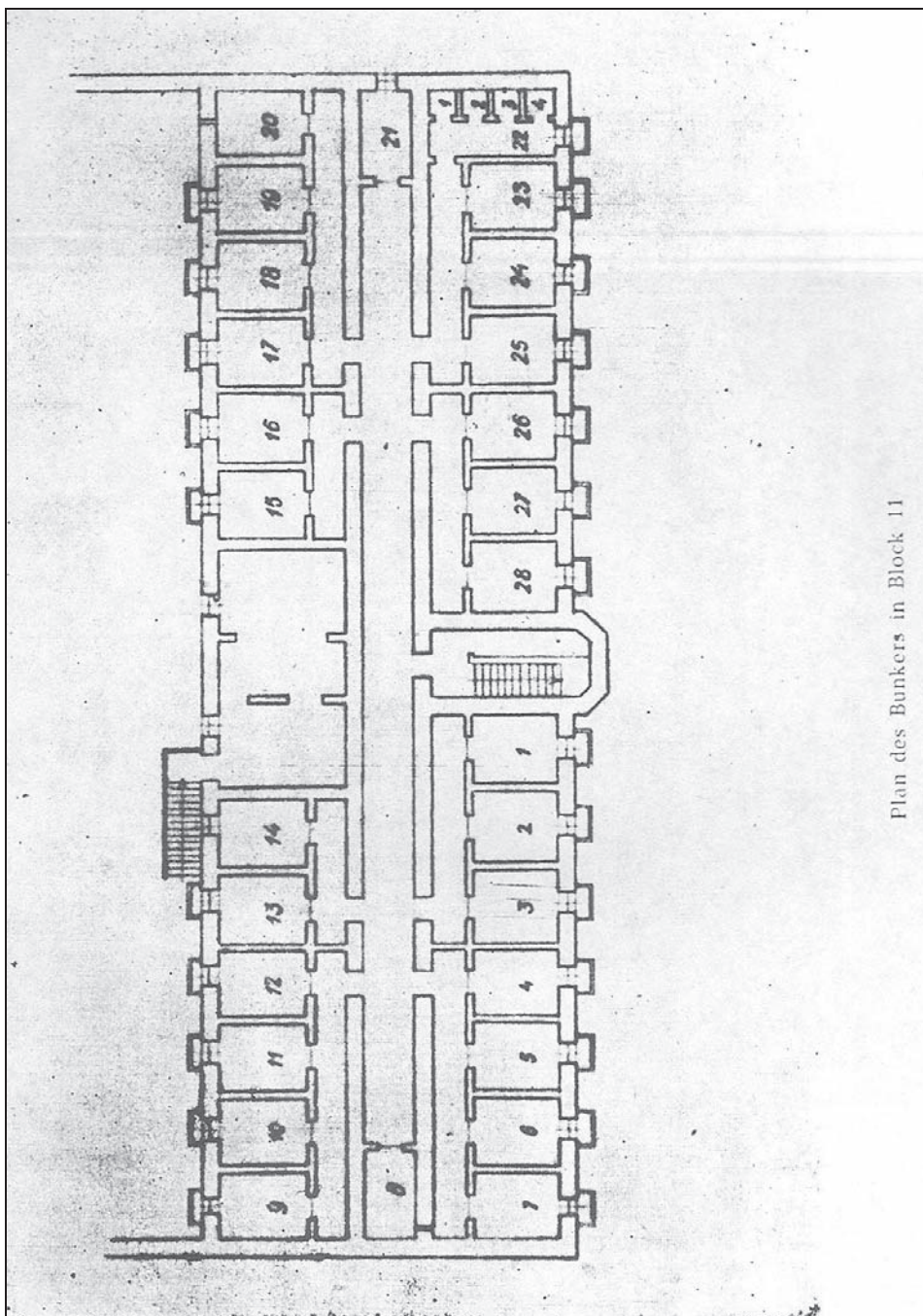


**Doc. 4:** Aerial photograph of the Auschwitz camp taken by the US air force on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944. National Archives Washington. Records of the Intelligence Agency (RG 373), Aerial Photographs of Auschwitz and Birkenau. Mission 60 PRS/462 60 SQ.

Can D 1509, Exposure 4057.

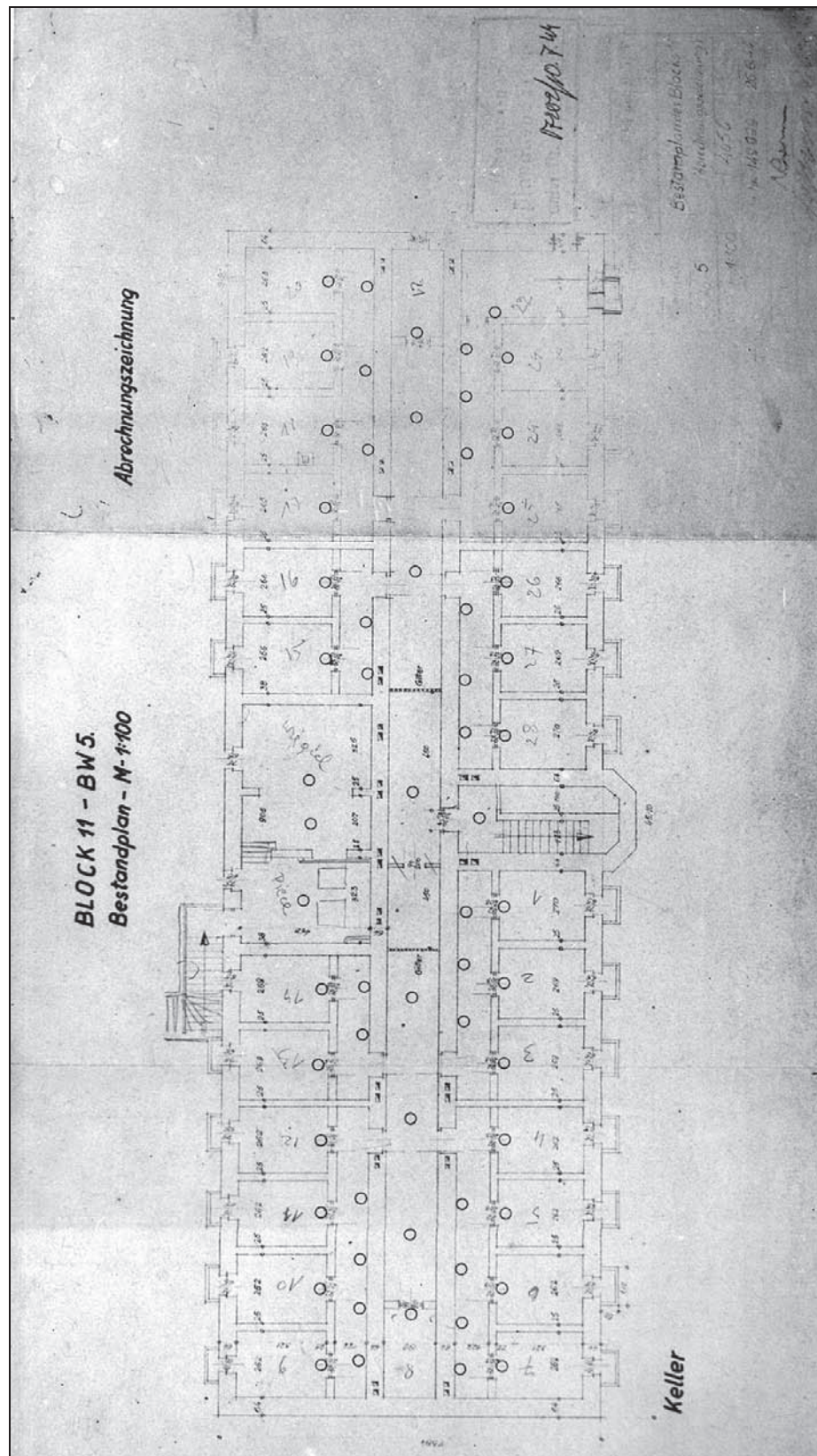






**Doc. 6:** Plan of the Bunker of Block 11 redrawn after the original plan No. 1152 of March 16, 1942. Franciszek Brol, Gerard Włoch, Jan Pilecki, "Das Bunkerbuch des Blocks 11 im Nazi-Konzentrationslager Auschwitz." *Hefte von Auschwitz*. Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oswiecimiu, I, 1959, p. 13.





**Doc. 7:** Original plan of the Bunker of Block 11 No. 4056 dated June 26, 1944. APMO, negative number 10270.

Gef. Nr.: 5 Kenn. Nr.: _____	
Name:	Kowal
Vorname:	Theodor
geb. am:	10.6.1910
in:	Charkow
Beruf:	Soldat
Dienstgrad:	Soldat
Religion:	Staat: Sowjet
Stand:	
Wohnort:	
Name der Ehefrau:	
Name der Eltern:	
Anschrift der Angehörigen:	
Eingeliefert:	6.10.41
Entlassen:	
Verstorben:	1.11.41

Karten aus der Kartei für sowjetische Kriegsgefangene

**Doc. 8:** Card file of Soviet prisoners of war. Card of a prisoner registered at Auschwitz on October 6, 1941. Jerzy Brandhuber, "Die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz," *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, 4, 1961, p. 51.



**Gef. Nr.:** 1573 **Kenn. Nr.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** Gribinikon NO-5850  
20 B

**Vorname:** Hanbij **geb. am:** 14.1.1908

**in:** Ejelogorje

**Beruf:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dienstgrad:** Soldat

**Religion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Staat:** UdSSR **Stand:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wohnort:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name der Ehefrau:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name der Eltern:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Anschrift der Angehörigen:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Eingeliefert:** 7.10.41.

**Entlassen:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Verstorben:** 4.12.41

\_\_\_\_\_

**Laufende Nummer im Totenbuch**  
**5145**

**Doc. 9:** Card file of Soviet prisoners of war. Card of a prisoner registered at Auschwitz on October 7, 1941, Document NO-5850.

ARCHIWUM		1941.		NO - 5850	
L.Nr.	R. Nr.	Block	Dat.	Todes- strunde	Name, Vorname, Geburts- Todesursache
1	<sup>E.M.</sup> 34087	3	7.10		unbekannt Herschlag
2	<sup>EM</sup> 35217	3	"		- " - Herschlag
3	<sup>EM.</sup> 35534	3	"		- " - - " -
4	449	2	"		- " - Darmkatarrh
5	200	2	"		- " - Herschlag
6	<sup>EM.</sup> 31022	8	10.16	15	- " - Allg. Körperschr.
7	<sup>EM.</sup> 35510	3	9.10	8	unbekannt Herzmuskelschr.
8	<sup>EM.</sup> 31622	12	"	8 <sup>30</sup>	- " - Nierenschw.
9	<sup>EM</sup> 31544	14	"	8 <sup>40</sup>	- " - Pustelkrankh.
10	<sup>EM</sup> 31873	13	"	10 <sup>00</sup>	- " - Allg. Körperschr.
11	<sup>EM.</sup> 34032	3	"	15 <sup>45</sup>	20.4.17. ?? Zachow Grigory Versagen des Herzens u. Kreislauf
12	997	KB.	10.10.	8 <sup>20</sup>	12.5.11. Konec Andrej Kucukow Piotr Nierenschw.
13	1138	3	11.10	8	22.5.16. Gromnick Arisimov Piotr Darmkatarrh
14	<sup>EM.</sup> 32321	13	"	8 <sup>45</sup>	unbekannt Allg. Körperschr.
15	<sup>EM.</sup> 31646	13	"	8 <sup>10</sup>	- " - Herschlag
16	1196	KB.	"	8 <sup>45</sup>	17.9.19. Gutsaeva. Pietkin Irina Phlegm.b. Körper.
17	2403	KB.	12.10	8	8.2.20. Belenok Mojzys Piotr Darmkatarrh
18	996	KB	13.10	8	17.5.21. Tolstoj Jerichin Worily Lungenschw.

Doc. 10: Totenbuch of Soviet prisoners of war, first page of registrations.

APMO, sygn. D-AuI-5/1 (Document NO-5850)



A B S C H R I F T !

Der Reichsführer -  $\frac{1}{2}$       Oranienburg, den 15. Nov. 41. 108  
5

Der Inspekteur der Konzentrat.Lager  
Pol./Az.: 14 f 14 /L/ Ot.-  
Geheim Tgb.-Nr. 217/41.

Betreff: Exekution von russischen Kriegsgefangenen.  
Bezug: ohne.  
Anlagen: keine.

**Geheim**

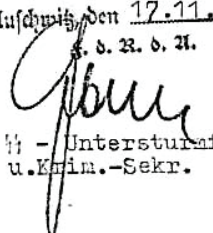
An die  
Lagerkommandanten der  
Konzentrationslager  
Da., Sah., Bu., Mau., Flo., Neu., Au., Gr.-Ro.  
Abdr.an: Lagerärzte, Schutzhaftlagerführer (E), Verwaltungen.

Der Reichsführer -  $\frac{1}{2}$  und Chef der Deutschen Polizei hat sich grundsätzlich damit einverstanden erklärt, daß von den in die Konz.Lager zur Exekution überstellten russischen Kriegsgefangenen (insbesondere Kommissare), die auf Grund ihrer körperlichen Beschaffenheit zu Arbeit in einem Steinbruch eingesetzt werden können, die Exekution aufgeschoben wird. Zu dieser Maßnahme muß vorher das Einverständnis des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD eingeholt werden. Hierzu wird befohlen:

Beim Eintreffen von Exekutionstransporten in die Lager sind die körperlich kräftigen Russen, die sich für eine Arbeit in einem Steinbruch eignen, durch den Schutzhaftlagerführer (E) und dem Lagerarzt heraus zu suchen. Eine namentliche Liste der herausgesuchten Russen ist in Doppel ausgefertigt hier vorzulegen. Auf dieser Liste muß der Lagerarzt vermerken, daß gegen den Arbeitseinsatz der Betreffenden ärztlicherseits keine Bedenken bestehen.

Nach Einverständniserklärung des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD wird die Überstellung der Betreffenden Russen in ein Steinbruchlager von hier befohlen.

gez. G l ü c k s  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  - Brigadeführer und  
Generalmajor der Waffen- $\frac{1}{2}$

Mitschrift, den 17.11.1941.  
f. d. R. d. H.  
  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  - Untersturmführer  
u. Krim.-Schr.

2

Doc. 11: Letter from Glücks dated November 15, 1941, directed to the commanders of all concentration camps on "Execution of Russian POWs."  
GARF, 7021-108-47, p. 5.



Konzentrationslager Auschwitz  
Abteilung II

Auschwitz, 17.11.41

An die  
Schutzhaftlagerführung des KL.-Au.,  
Schutzhaftlagerführer "E",  
A u s c h w i t z .

Auf Grund des umstehenden Erlasses sind die von der Exekution ausgenommen Russen namentlich hierher zu melden. Gleichzeitig wird ersucht nach hier zu berichten welche zum umstehenden Befehl in Frage kommen, da diese listenmässig beim IKL und beim Chef der Sicherheitspolizei eingereicht werden müssen. In dieser Hinsicht das Einvernehmen mit dem hiesigen Lagerarzt unbedingt erforderlich. In Frage kommen die auf der beiliegenden Liste aufgeführten Russen und die vom Soderkommando in der vergangenen Woche zur Exekution ausgesuchten russ. Kriegsgefangenen.

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz	
„Schutzhaftlagerführer E“	
17. XI. 1941	
Anlagen: 2	Sachbearbeiter:

Der Leiter der Abteilung II

*Grabner*

Hauptsturmführer u. Krim.Sekr.

*2 Anlagen*

**Doc. 12:** Letter from Grabner dated November 17, 1941 to Schutzhaftlagerführung des KL. Auschwitz. GARF, 7021-108-47, p. 5a.

24

Dat.	Nr.	zu. u. Vorname	Einkl.	Grund	Tag.	Entl.
10/8.	3171.	Maslak Ladisl 2.2.20. kurmike fabrik.		nr. 5.	9.41.	
30/8.	3267	Kaupel Justar 1.4.10. Ferien fabrik	Pl. 2 <sup>2</sup>	ni die Sk. am 31.8.41.		
5/9.	11779	Denner Fritz 21.12.99 Breslau Maschinenarbeit.	Pl. 14.	ver. 5.9.41		
5/9.	15083	Grosman Bruno 17.1.31 Breslau Schuhmacher	Pl. 14.	ver. 5.9.41		
5/9.	10792	Drost Roman 10.12.99 Kupno Landwirt	Pl. 18 <sup>2</sup>	ver. 5.9.41		
9/9.	20116	Blöde ?	Pl. 9.	nach dem B.B. le entlassen am 22.9.41.		
10/9.	3171	Grafrau Tadeuz 20.8.22. dt Kraunstadt	Pl. 11	fachwissen rest 16.9.41.		
10/9.	17137	Kokowski Tefil 8.2.16. Kleschin	Pl. 11	3 Tage entl. 11.9.41.		

Doc. 13: Bunkerbuch, p. 24. APMO, sygn. D-AuI-3/1, p. 24.

(4)		(5)	
Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.
Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.
Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.	Matr. Nr.
50	13164	Baranowski	verlegt nach Bl. 19, 20, 21
51	1237	Tomczak	verlegt nach Bl. 24/14
52	13633	Rydzewski	verlegt nach Bl. 24/14
53	14090	Janowski	verlegt nach Bl. 24/14
54	13135	Bozek	verlegt auf Bl. 24/14
55	1669	Skarzynski	verlegt auf Bl. 24/14
56	9348	Lachany	
57	11820	Hamanski	
58	16126	Lespinski	
59	15878	Isak	
60	5287	Hamanski	
61	15145	Praski	
62	17216	Stika	
63	814	Lachany	
64	19013	Kozminski	

Doc. 14: Register of Häftlingskrankenbau of Block 28, pp. 4-17. APMO, sygn. D-Aul-5/2.



①						②					
Zahl	Hr. Nr. Geburtsjahr	Alter Jahre	Name	Entlassen nach	Bemerkung	Zahl	Hr. Nr. Geburtsjahr	Alter Jahre	Name	Entlassen nach	Bemerkung
16	2107	11443	Smilski Karl			33	-	18618	Slivski Ludwig		
17	1574	18964	Konarsky Tefil			34	-	18666	Klein Stanislaus		
18	-	16713	Polak Edmund			35	-	19830	Pis' Ignatz		
19	5002	12509	Kozłowski Stanislaus			36	1912	11086	Elmer Stanislaus		
20	-	14005	Kierowski Johann			37	-	5107	Parlowski		
21	-	18514	Milewski Stanislaus			38	1757	7229	Brzez' Stanislaus		
22	-	14620	Matek Karl			39	-	10101	Kychoń Józef		
23	1762	5298	Kasowski Stanislaus			40	-	12556	Pomorski Edmund		
24	-	17217	Karowski Bogusław			41	-	4924	Kiktor Stanislaus		
25	-	19660	Zukowski Stanislaus			42	1910	14411	Likora Eugen		
26	-	11253	Kalinski			43	-	7767	Brzymajto		
27	-	14439	Pawlec			44	-	18083	Merkel Viktor		
28	-	8502	Bemstra			45	-	10106	Mlezi Stanislaus		
29	-	12765	Lajz			46	-	9886	Tranowski Eugen		
30	-	14322	Rydzewski			47	-	10539	Wlarczy Józef		
31	-	8039	Mosiniak			48	-	12913	Grumacki Józef		
32	-	12905	Leppowski Kaver			49	3004	12401	Jakubowski Viktor		
Entlassen in das Lager.						Entlassen in das Lager.					

③						④					
Zahl	Hr. Nr. Geburtsjahr	Alter Jahre	Name	Entlassen nach	Bemerkung	Zahl	Hr. Nr. Geburtsjahr	Alter Jahre	Name	Entlassen nach	Bemerkung
50	1761	10133	Lutka Paul			67	1958	3662	Boick Gustav		
51	-	11156	Jedrejczyk Stanislaus			68	1957	15152	Morison Anton		
52	-	4055	Golabek Gabriel			69	-	14300	Skasiak Stephan		
53	1814	9740	Russek Stanislaus			70	2131	12831	Lesielski Stanislaus		
54	1710	19236	Kolodziej Alex			71	-	17029	Lichelski Stanislaus		
55	-	17110	Karpinski Stanislaus			72	1738	15440	Polak Stanislaus		
56	-	12120	Bermisier Johann			73	-	8020	Grumacki		
57	-	15114	Parlowski Stephan			74	1553	13844	Langer Stanislaus		
58	-	11261	Jastrzebski Adam			75	-	16968	Mucha Joseph		
59	-	13569	Rymer Stanislaus			76	1846	14917	Lisowski Andreas		
60	-	12902	Kabonki Józef			77	-	8163	Laminier Stanislaus		
61	-	11014	Anderski Viktor			78	-	8324	Pychaj Richard		
62	-	4115	Stelinski Stanislaus			79	1921	11626	Pann Joseph		
63	2131	11415	Wlad Johann			80	-	11980	Kramarski Alex		
64	-	17086	Pastoryk Ulrich			81	-	13420	Frankowski Adalbert		
65	-	16609	Malyssch Franz			82	-	12250	Jankowski Johann		
66	-	12323	Stelinski Stanislaus			83	-	14238	Byra Anton		
Entlassen in das Lager.						Entlassen in das Lager.					

Doc. 14 continued.

100						101					
Id.	Het. St. Geburtsort	Stadtl. Nr.	Namens:	Entlass. nach:	Bemerkung:	Id.	Het. St. Geburtsort	Stadtl. Nr.	Namens:	Entlass. nach:	Bemerkung:
84	-	8115	Lombowski Johann						<u>6.9.41.</u>		
85	-	4188	Thomasek Stanislaus			101	-	8065	Chruski Stanislaus	nach Bl. 19	
86	-	1933	Kozminski Johann			102	-	11735	Klak Ladislaus	aus dem Lager	als polnischer Arbeiter
87	1633	2387	Grusicki Stanislaus			103	-	13842	Thoma-Murk Stanislaus	- - -	
88	-	15807	Turms Edward						<u>7.9.41.</u>		
89	-	10993	Leb Anton			104	-	12910	Golinski Julian	nach Bl. 19	
90	-	16108	Pajka Joseph						<u>10.9.41.</u>		
91	-	11865	Katula Eugen			105	1291	11617	Willems Joseph		
92	-	13004	Kosminski Stanislaus			106	-	19055	Kempel Stanislaus	nach Bl. 19	
93	-	11804	Truchaczewski Edward			107	-	5422	Thoma Hansel		
94	1607	8213	Kienicki Theodor			108	-	18532	Kosminski Eugen		
95	-	13621	Lewandowski Stanislaus			109	-	19826	Kosminski Johann		
96	1111	13111	Kajsa Stanislaus			110	-	10715	Wojcikowski Stanislaus		
97	-	1111	Wojcikowski Stanislaus			111	-	6452	Kosminski Stanislaus		
98	2196	18219	Kajsa Stanislaus			112	-	16173	Jelonek Jakob		
99	-	5796	Kajsa Stanislaus			113	-	14793	Kosminski Stanislaus		
100	-	2736	Kajsa Stanislaus			114	-	6434	Kosminski Stanislaus		

102						103					
Id.	Het. St. Geburtsort	Stadtl. Nr.	Namens:	Entlass. nach:	Bemerkung:	Id.	Het. St. Geburtsort	Stadtl. Nr.	Namens:	Entlass. nach:	Bemerkung:
115	-	16761	Marcynski Stanislaus			132	-	17717	Lewandowski Joseph		
116	-	10613	Belnicki Adam			133	-	17579	Kosminski Stanislaus		
117	2010	12105	Kosminski Stanislaus			134	-	17017	Kosminski Stanislaus		
118	-	12430	Kosminski Stanislaus			135	-	14209	Kosminski Stanislaus		
119	-	8230	Kosminski Stanislaus			136	2187	7313	Kosminski Stanislaus		
120	-	17004	Kosminski Stanislaus			137	-	10000	Kosminski Stanislaus		
121	-	16781	Kosminski Stanislaus			138	-	11356	Kosminski Stanislaus		
122	117	10426	Kosminski Stanislaus			139	-	12491	Kosminski Stanislaus		
123	-	12367	Kosminski Stanislaus			140	-	13965	Kosminski Stanislaus		
124	-	15857	Kosminski Stanislaus						<u>11.9.41.</u>		
125	1494	510	Kosminski Stanislaus			141	1556	8067	Kosminski Stanislaus	nach Bl. 20	
126	1715	1544	Kosminski Stanislaus			142	-	16311	Kosminski Stanislaus	nach Bl. 20	
127	-	13071	Kosminski Stanislaus						<u>12.9.41.</u>		
128	-	15229	Kosminski Stanislaus			143	-	17221	Kosminski Stanislaus	nach Bl. 1.	
129	-	16353	Kosminski Stanislaus						<u>13.9.41.</u>		
130	-	7104	Kosminski Stanislaus			144	-	11958	Kosminski Stanislaus	nach Bl. 1.	
131	-	14388	Kosminski Stanislaus			145	-	11491	Kosminski Stanislaus	- - -	

Doc. 14 continued.

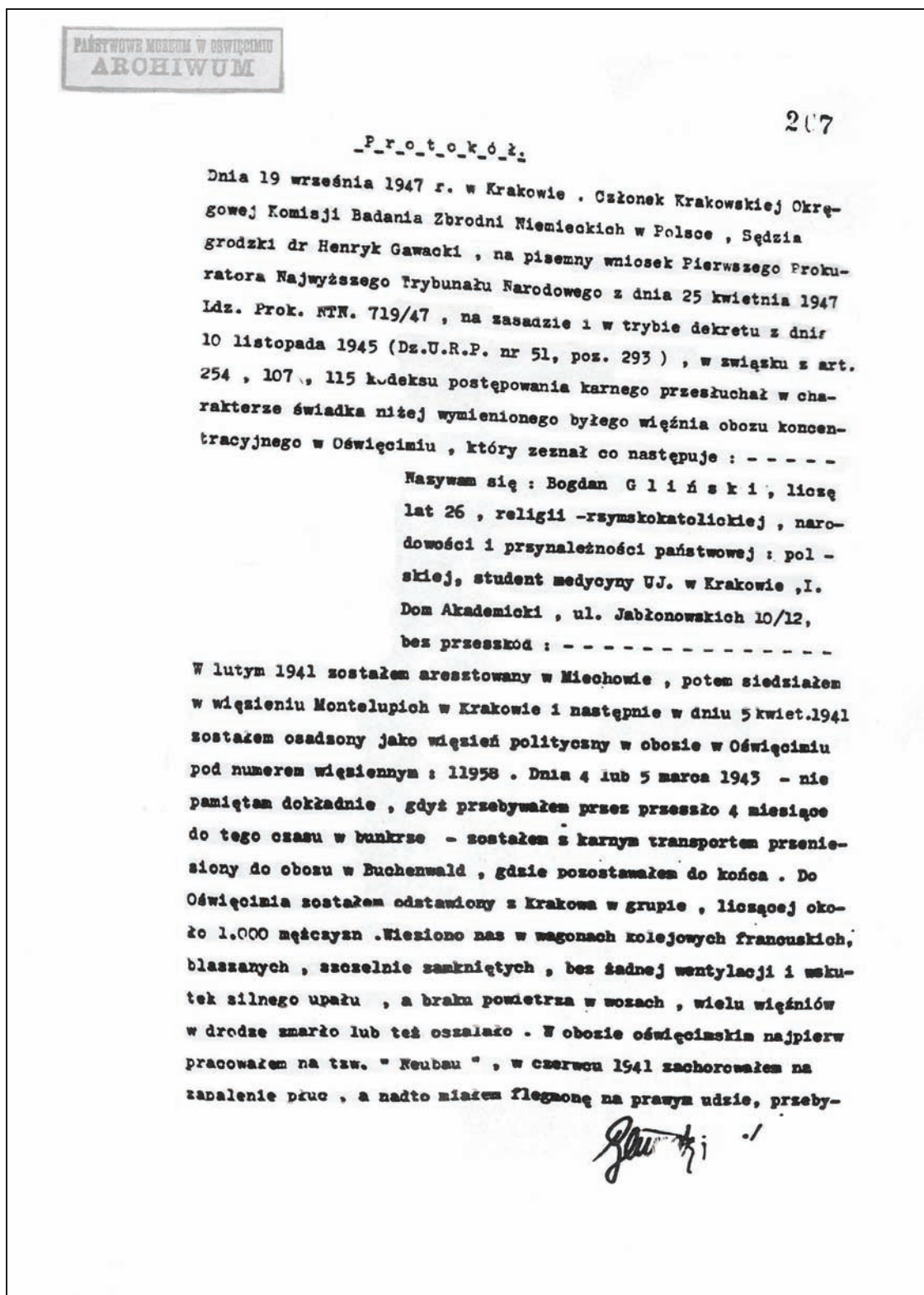


(14)					(15)				
Matr. Nr.	Sept. 1941	Namen	Entlassen nach:	Bemerkung	Matr. Nr.	Sept. 1941	Namen	Entlassen nach:	Bemerkung
146	-	11858 Mazyk Joseph	Bl. 1.		162	2396	12496 Kosa, Kasimir		
		16.9.41.			163	-	4230 Gielkowski, Thaddeus		
147	-	13331 Jakowicz Andrzej	Töte nach Bl. 19		164	2032	13673 Kucowski, Ludwik		entlassen
148	-	11582 Kosiński, Stefan	-		165	2300	16443 Kulczycki, Ludwik		
149	-	7791 Lusia, Herbert			166	-	17016 Muszyński, Bernard		
150	2335	16763 Lubiński, Józef			167	1722	18637 Sawicki, Józef		
151	-	18442 Łazarski, Stefan			168	2033	7586 Przemyski, Józef		
152	1025	15092 Linnel, Paul	Töte nach Bl. 27		169	1935	17811 Lasasa, Viktor		
153	1724	10042 Filipiak, Marian	-		170	-	1466 Burek, Thaddeus		
154	1583	12411 Lina, Franz			171	-	3457 Policki, Kasimir		
155	-	2474 Matuszewska, Stanisława			172	-	18419 Gajkowski, Stanisław		
156	2140	14055 Kulpina, Tadeusz			173	-	11574 Gładziński, Stanisław		
157	-	13222 Smutek, Bolesław			174	1615	11560 Fajstak, Stanisław		
158	1849	19357 Bortowski, Stefan			175	-	9351 Brodecki, Stanisław		
159	-	16130 Pawlak, Józef			176	2141	5074 Wiśniewski, Karol		
160	1885	15981 Kępczyński, Stanisław			177	-	13430 Kępczyński, Stefan		
161	-	12200 Kucowski, Ludwik		entlassen	178	-	19074 Kucowski, Stanisław		

(16)					(17)				
Matr. Nr.	Sept. 1941	Namen	Entlassen nach:	Bemerkung	Matr. Nr.	Sept. 1941	Namen	Entlassen nach:	Bemerkung
179	-	13792 Jaworski, Andrzej			193	-	4070 Kępczyński, Józef	entlassen	
180	2281	16679 Kempny, Józef			194	-	1007 Michalski, Piotr		
181	-	15514 Lada, Franz			195	-	18686 Radzicki, Adam		
		17.9.41.			196	-	14337 Kloc, Edmund		
182	219	13072 Markiewicz, Andrzej			197	-	1581 Lubinski, Stanisław		
183	2500	20562 Nikucki, Kasimir			198	-	18411 Bronicki, Stanisław		
184	113	12721 Kucowski, Stanisław			199	2335	15664 Rogalski, Bolesław		
185	1125	11073 Kucowski, Thaddeus			200	-	16051 Kępczyński, Viktor		
186	-	10919 Kucowski, Józef			201	-	2173 Stefanowski, Józef		
187	-	14673 Kucowski, Józef			202	1525	16927 Fink, Alexander		
		18.9.41.			203	-	11525 Lina, Viktor		
188	-	13281 Kucowski, Stanisław	entlassen		204	-	17415 Kucowski, Thaddeus		
189	-	4082 Kucowski, Stanisław	entlassen nach Bl. 19		205	2300	18534 Kucowski, Józef		
		16.9.41.			206	-	14221 Lina, Józef		
190	2491	19099 Kucowski, Franz	entlassen		207	113	11746 Janowski, Józef		
191	-	15315 Kucowski, Józef	-		208	1582	5730 Kucowski, Stanisław		
192	-	10338 Kucowski, Józef	-		209	2161	3711 Kucowski, Józef		

Doc. 14 continued.

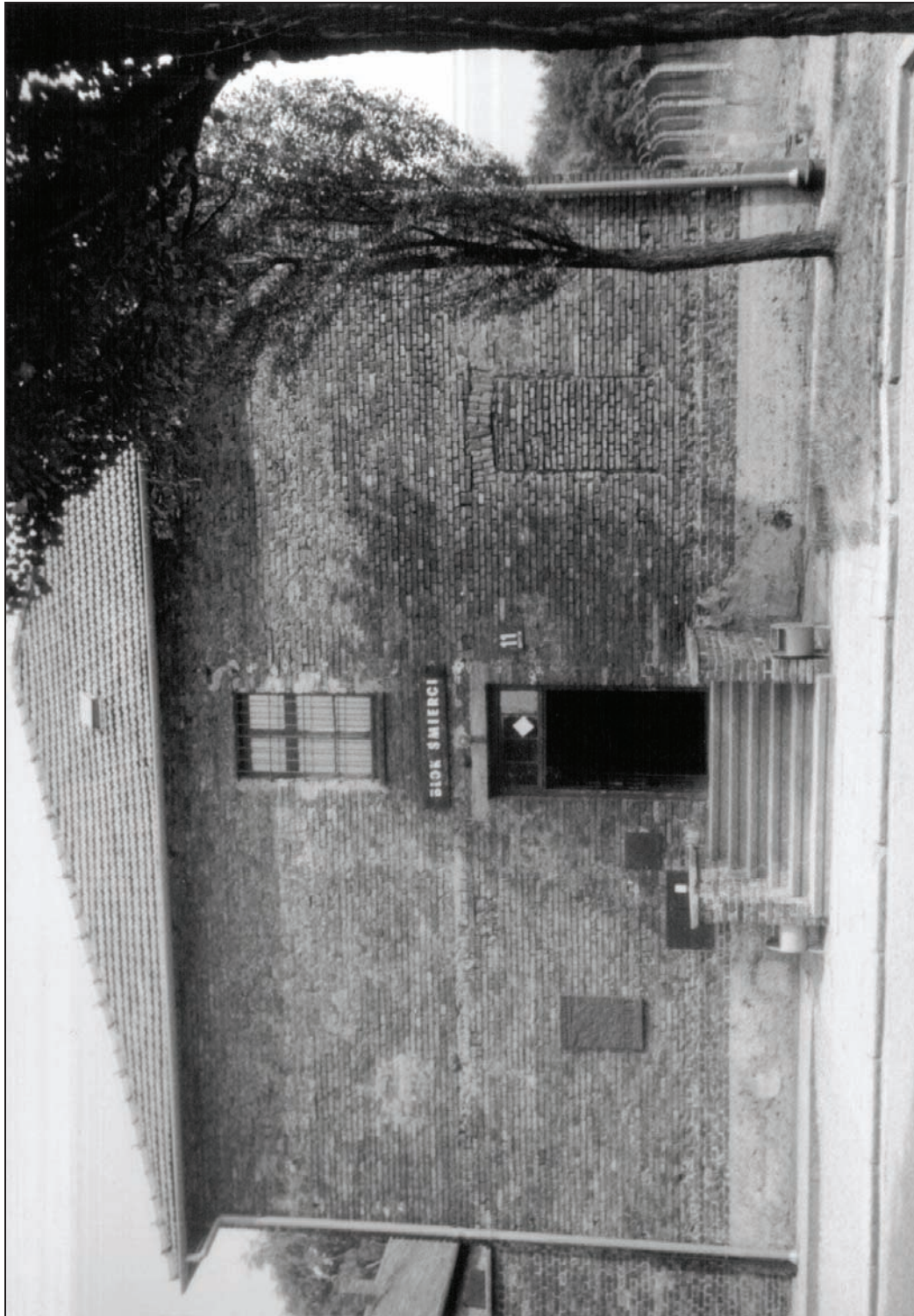


**Doc. 15:** First page of minutes of deposition of Bogdan Gliński. Trial of the camp garrison. APMO, sygn. Drp.-ZOd/54d, p. 207.



## Photographs

All photographs taken by Carlo Mattogno in October 1991.



**Photo 1:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NE, entry door.





**Photo 2:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, yard.



**Photo 3:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NE, wall and gate of the yard.





**Photo 4:** Block 11, outside, walls facing NE and SSW.



**Photo 5:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NE, entry door and hallway.



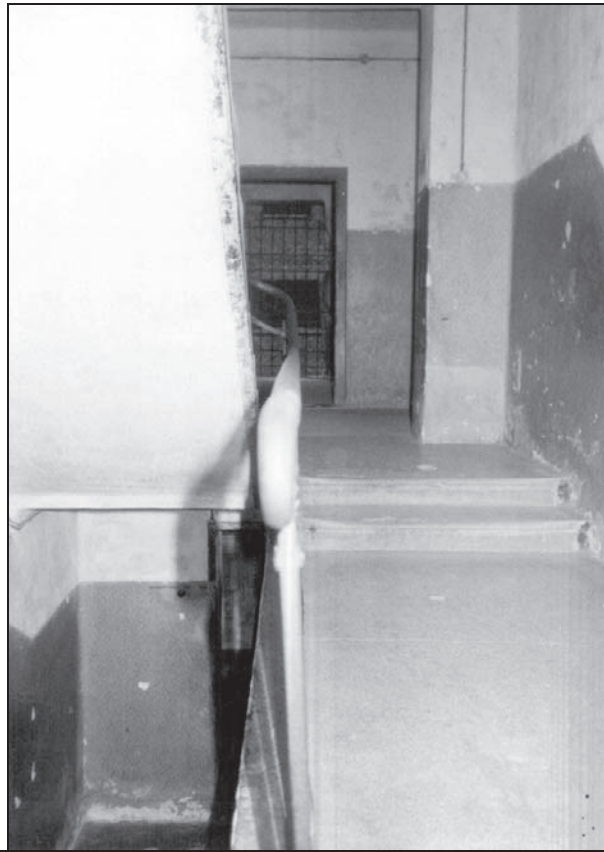


**Photo 6:** Block 11, inside, ground floor, hallway seen from the entrance.



**Photo 7:** Block 11, inside, ground floor, hallway seen from the opposite side toward the entrance door.

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**Photo 8:** Block 11, inside, groundfloor and exit to the yard (top right); entrance door to Bunker (bottom left).



**Photo 9:** Block 11, inside, steel door of the Bunker seen from the stairs.





**Photo 10:** Block 11, inside, steel door of the Bunker seen from the stairs.

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**Photo 11:** Block 11, inside, steel door of the Bunker seen from the stairs.



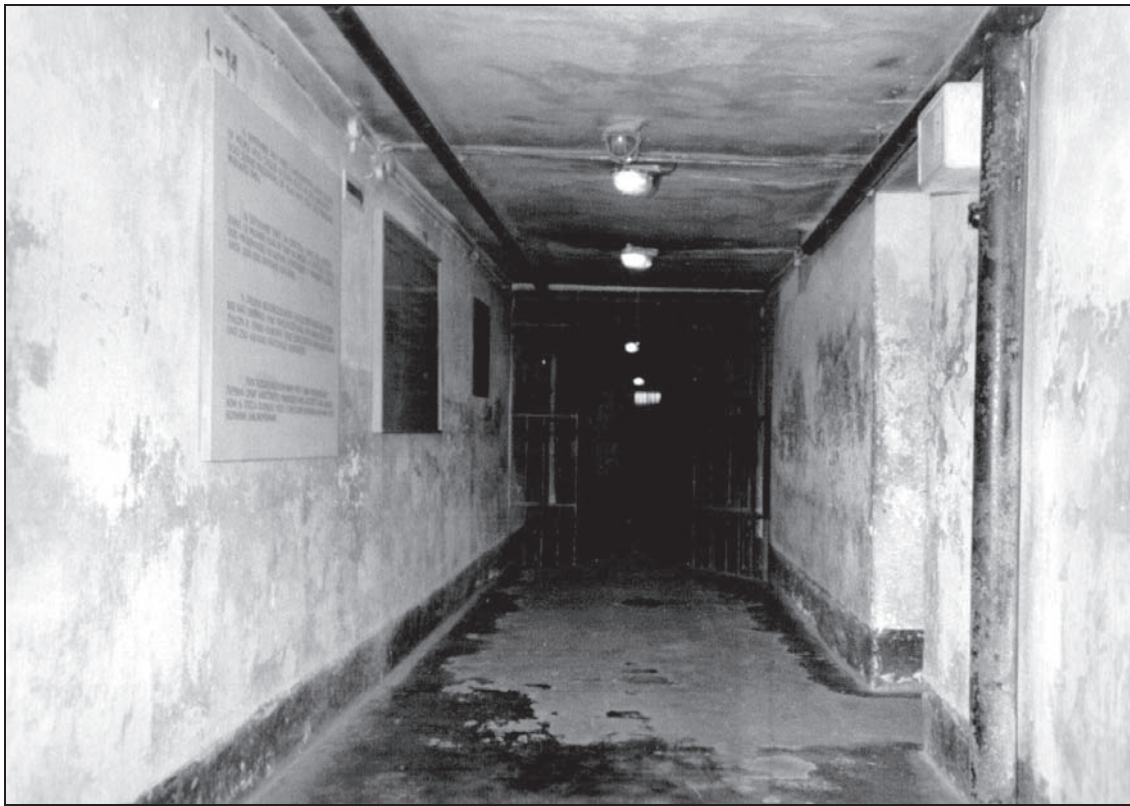
**Photo 12:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, iron grid separating the left side of the Bunker from its right side.

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**Photo 13:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, left side, central hallway.



**Photo 14:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, central hallway.



**Photo 15:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, central hallway.





**Photo 16:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, central hallway.

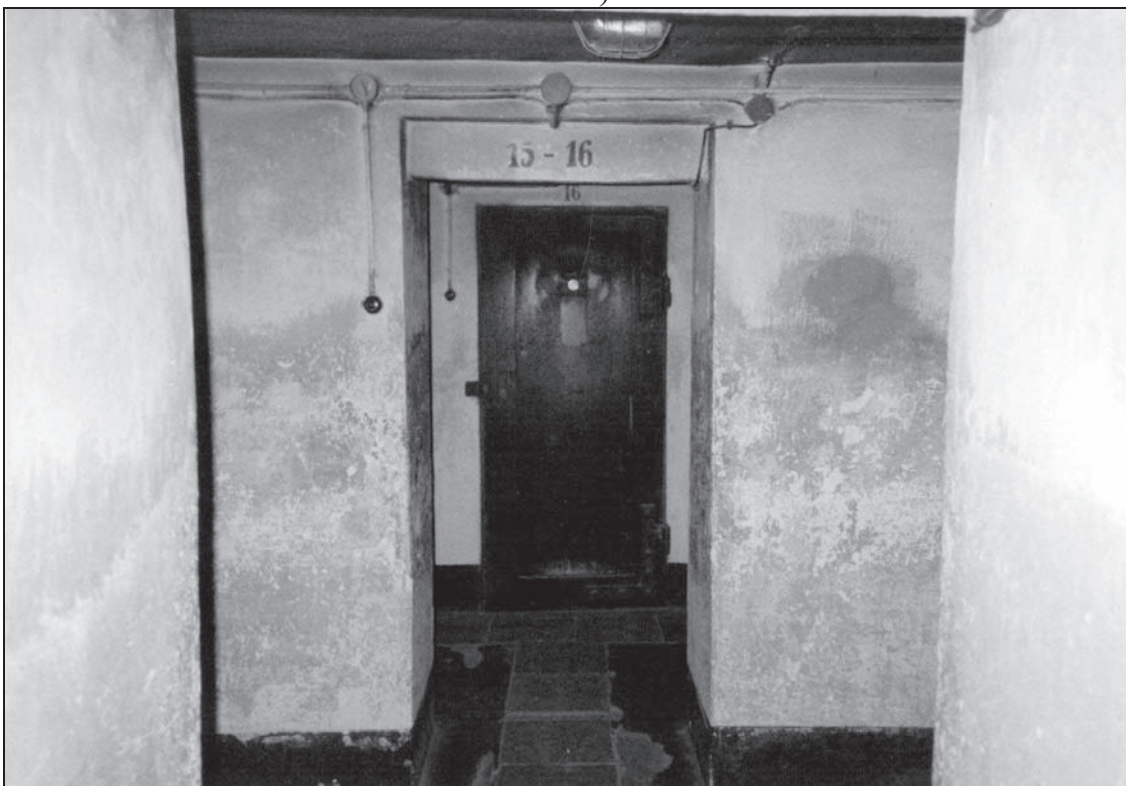


**Photo 17:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, cell no. 21.





**Photo 18:** Block 11, inside, right side, left-side lateral corridor (cells nos. 17-20).



**Photo 19:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, door to cell no. 16.

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**Photo 20:** Block 11, inside, right side, door to cell no. 25.



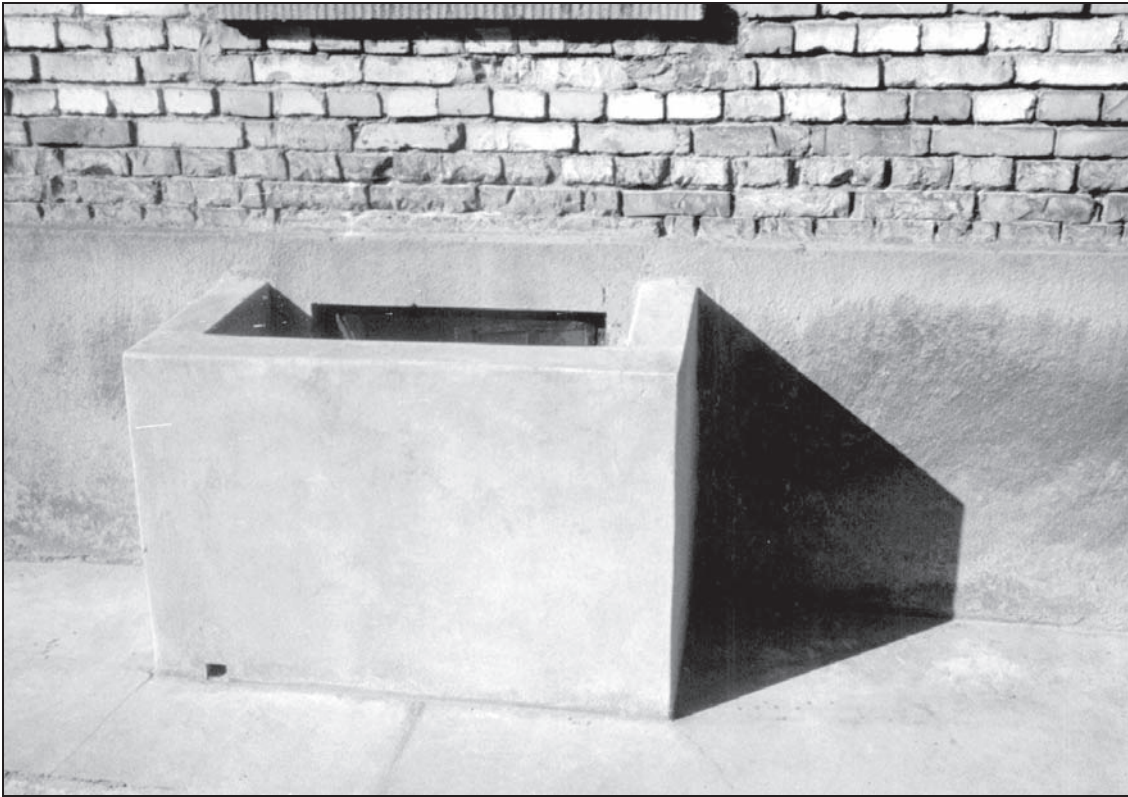


**Photo 21:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, concrete covers surrounding the windows of the Bunker cells.

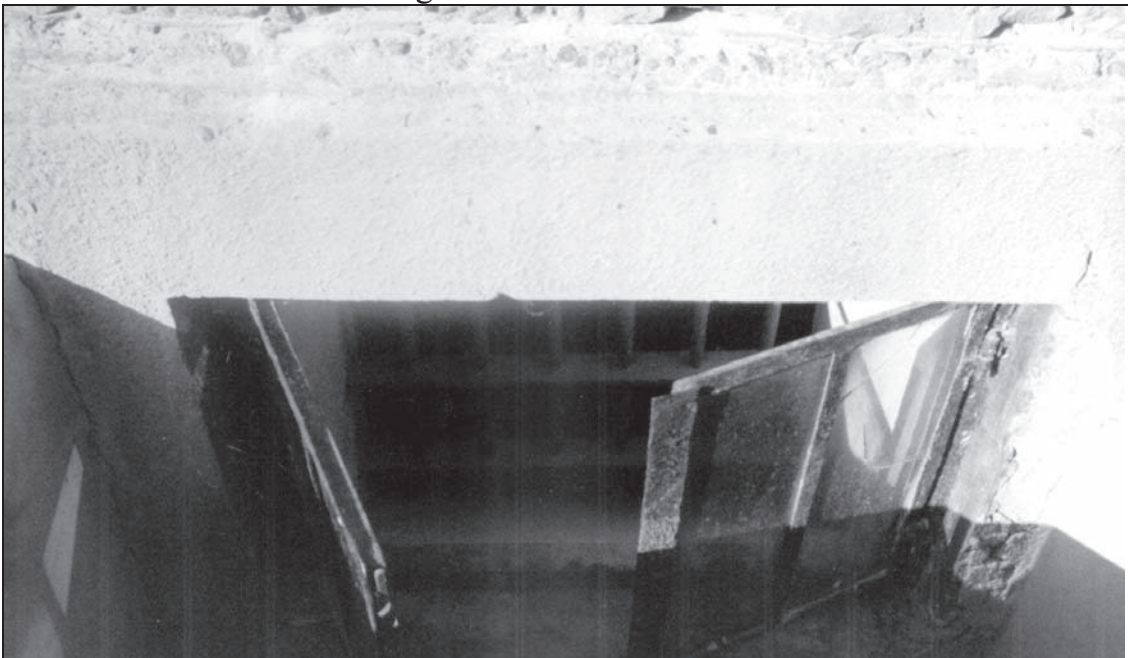


**Photo 22:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, concrete covers surrounding the windows of the Bunker cells.

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**Photo 23:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, one of the concrete covers surrounding the windows of a Bunker cell.



**Photo 24:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, window of one of the Bunker cells surrounded by a concrete cover.

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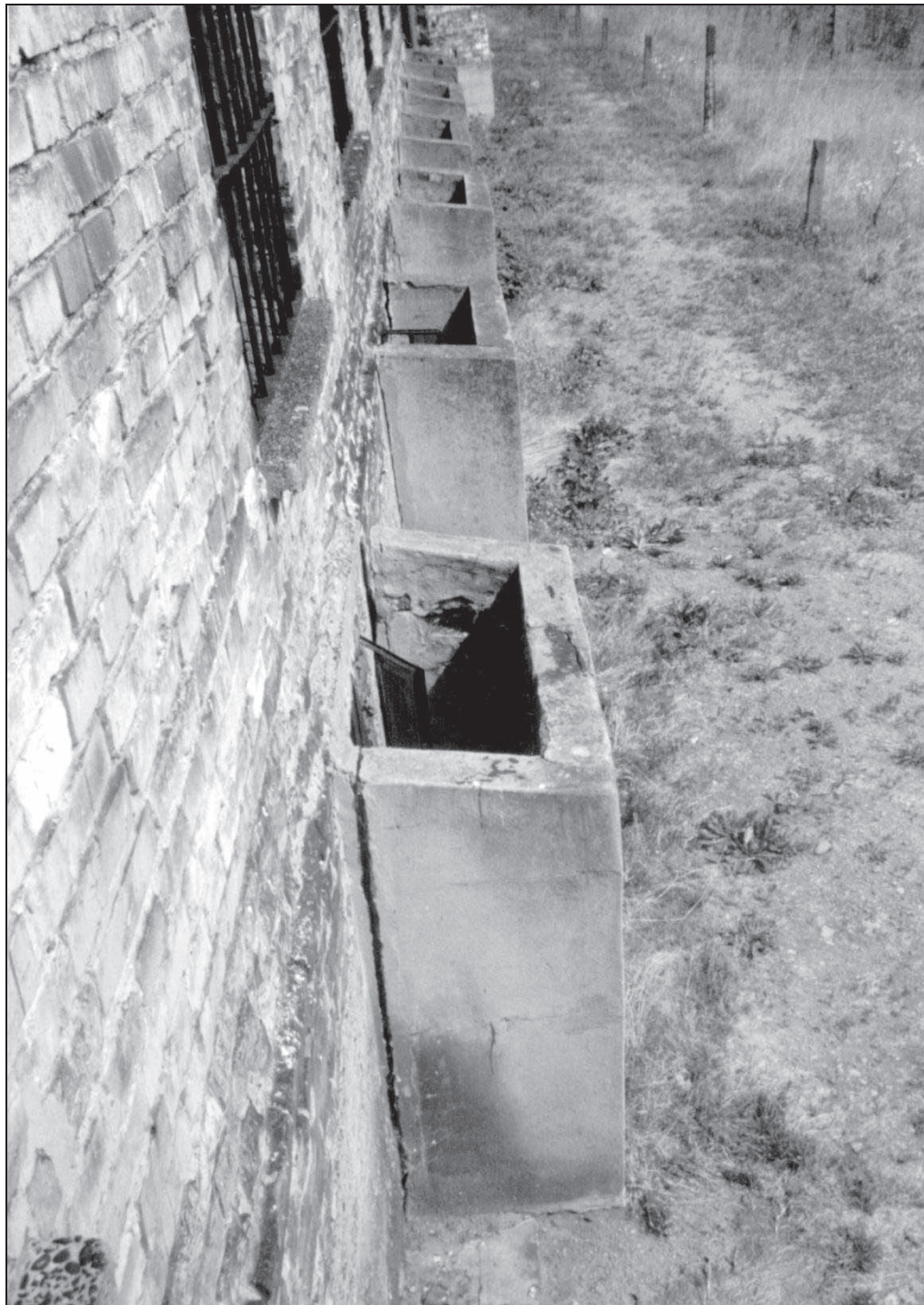




**Photo 25:** Block 11, outside, wall facing NNE, window of cell no. 14.



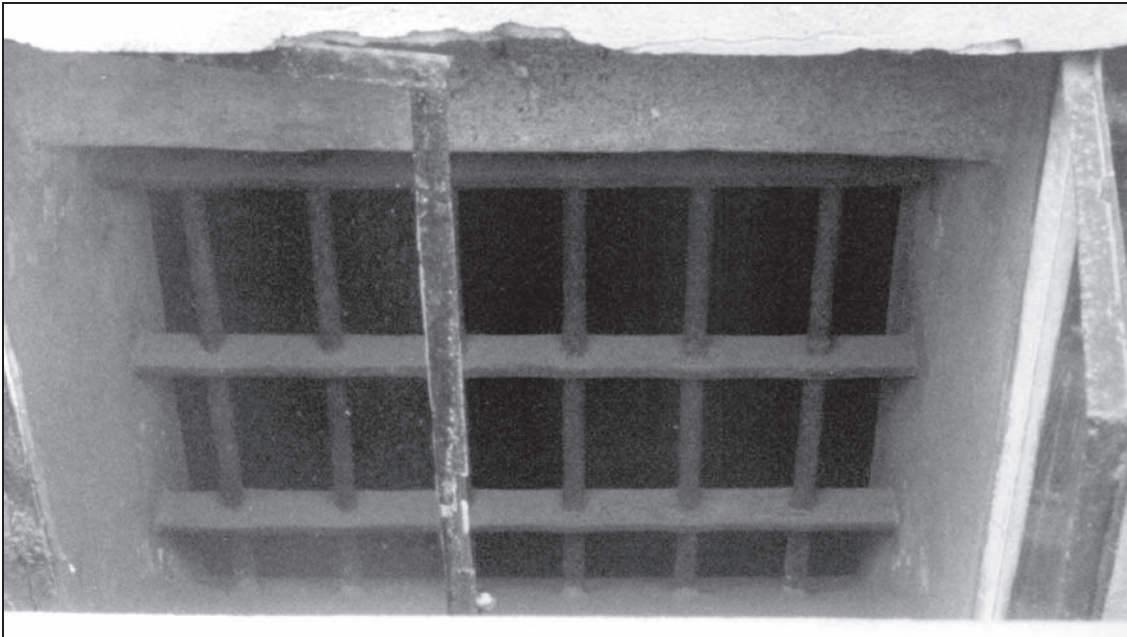
**Photo 26:** Block 11, outside, wall facing SSW, concrete covers surrounding the windows of the Bunker cells.



**Photo 27:** Block 11, wall facing SSW, close-up of concrete covers surrounding the windows of the Bunker cells.

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**Photo 28:** Block 11, outside, wall facing SSW, window of one of the Bunker cells surrounded by a concrete cover .



**Photo 29:** Block 11, outside, wall facing SE, sheet-metal boxes covering the air-supply holes of the 4 stand-up cells (*Stehzellen*) of the Bunker. In the center underneath the large window: window of cell no. 21 (see Photo 17).

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**Photo 30:** Block 11, outside, wall facing SE, sheet-metal boxes covering the air-supply holes of the 4 stand-up cells of the Bunker.



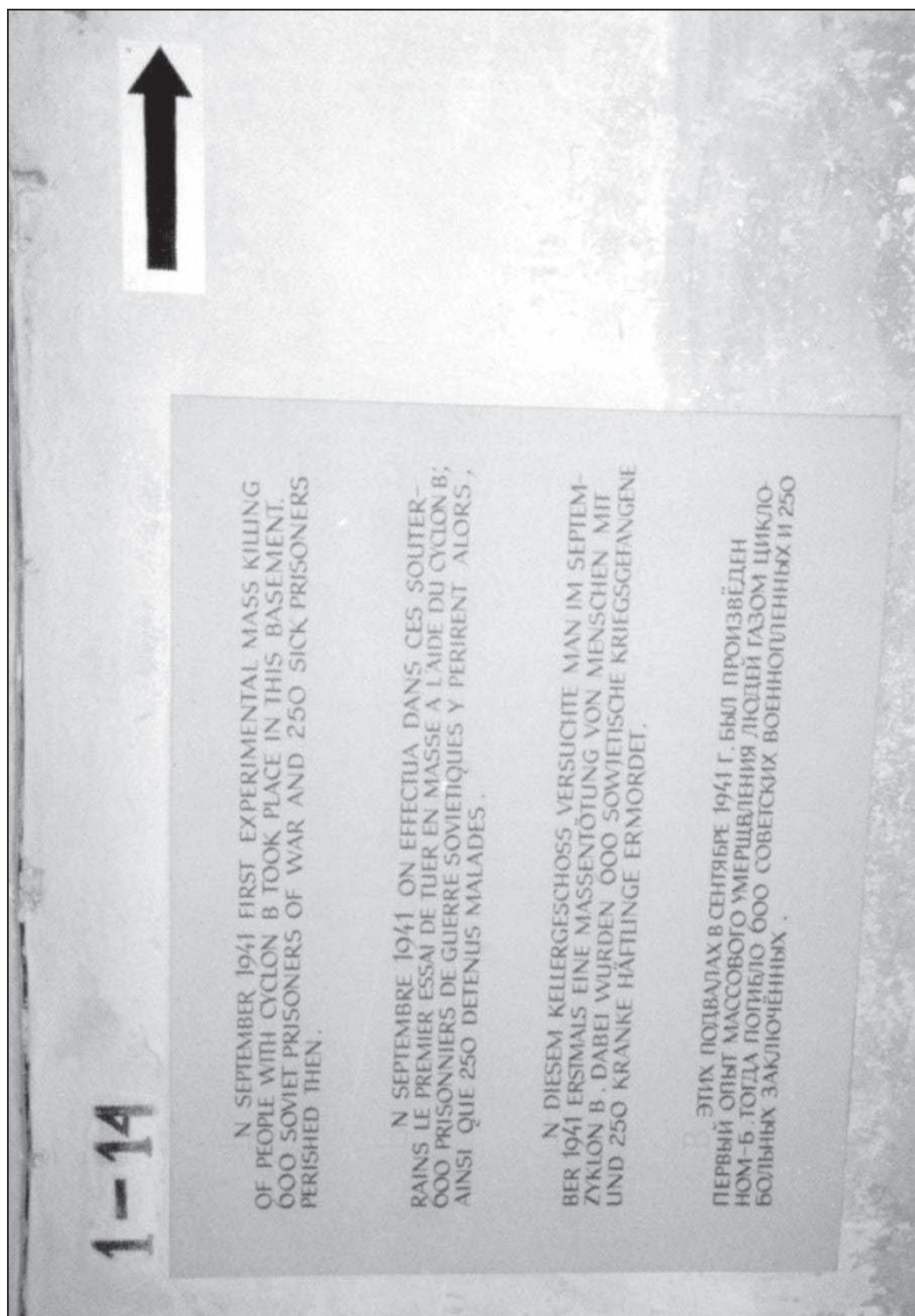
**Photo 31:** Block 11, outside, wall facing SE, close-up of one of the sheet metal boxes.

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**Photo 32:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, stand-up cells.



**Photo 33:** Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, central hallway, plate commemorating the alleged homicidal gassing of September 1941.

## Abbreviations

- AGK: *Archiwum Głównej Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu* (Archive of the Central Investigating Commission of the Crimes Against the Polish people – National Monument) Warsaw
- APMO: *Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu* (Archive of National Museum Auschwitz)
- FO: *Foreign Office Papers* (Public Record Office, Kew), England
- GARF: *Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation) Moscow
- PRO: Public Record Office, Kew, England
- RGVA: *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv* (Russian State War Archive)
- ZStL: *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen*, Ludwigsburg.

## Note on Polish Sources

The documents of the Höss trial (*Akta Krakowskiej Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w sprawie byłego komendanta obozu koncentracyjnego w Oświęcim-Brzezince Rudolfa Hössa*) consist of 21 volumes (vol. 1-21).

The document of the trial of the camp garrison (*Akta sprawy byłych członków załogi obozu koncentracyjnego Oświęcim-Brzezinka*) consists of 67 volumes (vol. 1 – 67), which include also the 21 volumes of the Höss trial. The originals are in Warsaw in the Archives of the Central Commission of Investigation into the Crimes against the Polish People – National Monument (*Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni w Polsce, aktualmente Główna Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*) with a copy in the Auschwitz Museum.

The classification system of these documents varies for the two institutions. In the Warsaw Archives they are classified under the reference “NTN” (= *Najwyższy Tribunal Narodowy*, Supreme National Court) and the numbers 82 through 150, but some volumes that refer to the trial of the camp garrison have their own numbering (151 through 175). This does not facilitate the identification of the respective volumes. Where this identification became impossible, I have given only the archival reference. I have done the same for the references that I have taken from the Auschwitz Mu-



seum, indicating, wherever possible, the relevant volume in square brackets.

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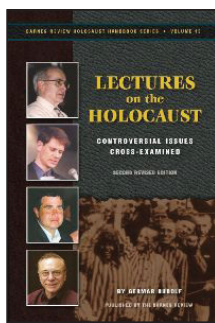
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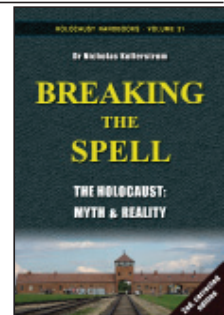
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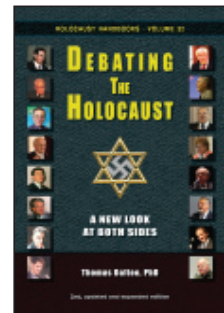


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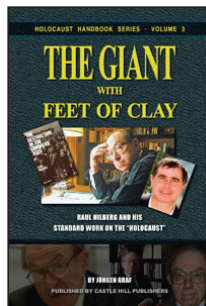
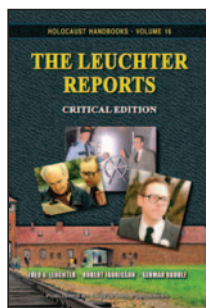
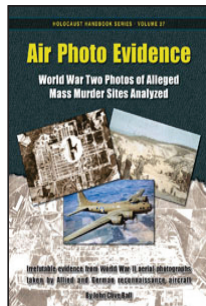
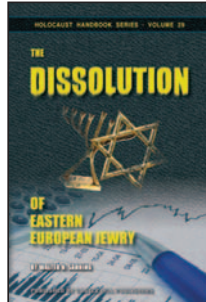
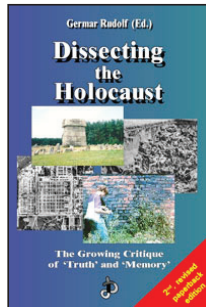
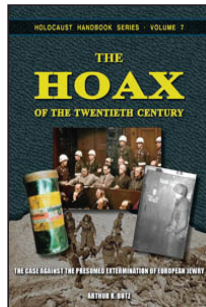
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Holocaust narrative with revisionist challenges and then analyzes the mainstream's responses to them. He reveals the weaknesses of both sides, while declaring revisionism the winner of the current state of the debate. 2nd, revised and expanded edition, 332 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#32)

**The Hoax of the Twentieth Century. The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry.** By Arthur R. Butz. The first writer to analyze the entire Holocaust complex in a precise scientific manner. This book exhibits the overwhelming force of arguments accumulated by the mid-1970s. It continues to be a major historical reference work, frequently cited by prominent personalities. This edition has numerous supplements with new information gathered over the last 35 years. Fourth edition, 524 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#7)

**Dissecting the Holocaust. The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory.'** Edited by Germar Rudolf. *Dissecting the Holocaust* applies state-of-the-art scientific technique and classic methods of detection to investigate the alleged murder of millions of Jews by Germans during World War II. In 22 contributions—each of some 30 pages—the 17 authors dissect generally accepted paradigms of the “Holocaust.” It reads as exciting as a crime novel: so many lies, forgeries and deceptions by politicians, historians and scientists are proven. This is the intellectual adventure of the 21st century. Be part of it! Second revised edition. 620 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#1)

**The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry.** By Walter N. Sanning. Six Million Jews died in the Holocaust. Sanning did not take that number at face value, but thoroughly explored European population developments and shifts mainly caused by emigration as well as deportations and evacuations conducted by both Nazis and the Soviets, among other things. The book is based mainly on Jewish, Zionist and mainstream sources. It concludes that a sizeable share of the Jews found missing during local censuses after the Second World War, which were so far counted as “Holocaust victims,” had either emigrated (mainly to Israel or the U.S.) or had been deported by Stalin to Siberian labor camps. 2nd, corrected edition, foreword by A.R. Butz, epilogue by Germar Rudolf containing important updates; 224 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography (#29).

**Air Photo Evidence: World War Two Photos of Alleged Mass Murder Sites Analyzed.** By John C. Ball. During World War Two both German and Allied reconnaissance aircraft took countless air photos of places of tactical and strategic interest in Europe. These photos are prime evidence for the investigation of the Holocaust. Air photos of locations like Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Babi Yar etc. permit an insight into what did or did not happen there. John Ball has unearthed many pertinent photos and has thoroughly analyzed them. This book is full of air photo reproductions and schematic drawings explaining them. According to the author, these images refute many of the atrocity claims made by witnesses in connection with events in the German sphere of influence. 3rd revised and expanded edition. Edited by Germar Rudolf; with a contribution by Carlo Mattogno. 168 pages, 8.5”x11”, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index (#27).

**The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition.** By Fred Leuchter, Robert Faurisson and Germar Rudolf. Between 1988 and 1991, U.S. expert on execution technologies Fred Leuchter wrote four detailed reports addressing whether the Third Reich operated homicidal gas chambers. The first report on Auschwitz and Majdanek became world famous. Based on chemical analyses and various technical arguments, Leuchter concluded that the locations investigated “could not have then been, or now be, utilized or seriously considered to function as execution gas chambers.” 4th edition, 252 pages, b&w illustrations. (#16)

**The Giant with Feet of Clay: Raul Hilberg and His Standard Work on the “Holocaust.”** By Jürgen Graf. Raul Hilberg’s major work *The Destruction of European Jewry* is an orthodox standard work on the Holocaust. But what evidence does Hilberg provide to back his thesis that there was a German plan to exterminate Jews, carried out mainly in gas chambers? Jürgen Graf applies the methods of critical analysis to Hilberg’s evidence and examines the results in light of modern historiography. The results of Graf’s critical analysis are devastating for Hilberg. 2nd, corrected edition, 139 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#3)

**Jewish Emigration from the Third Reich.** By Ingrid Weckert. Current historical writings about the Third Reich claim state it was difficult for Jews to flee from Nazi persecution. The truth is that Jewish emigration was welcomed by the German authori-

ties. Emigration was not some kind of wild flight, but rather a lawfully determined and regulated matter. Weckert's booklet elucidates the emigration process in law and policy. She shows that German and Jewish authorities worked closely together. Jews interested in emigrating received detailed advice and offers of help from both sides. 2nd ed., 130 pages, index. (#12)

**Inside the Gas Chambers: The Extermination of Mainstream Holocaust Historiography.** By Carlo Mattogno. Neither increased media propaganda or political pressure nor judicial persecution can stifle revisionism. Hence, in early 2011, the Holocaust Orthodoxy published a 400 pp. book (in German) claiming to refute "revisionist propaganda," trying again to prove "once and for all" that there were homicidal gas chambers at the camps of Dachau, Natzweiler, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme, Stutthof... you name them. Mattogno shows with his detailed analysis of this work of propaganda that mainstream Holocaust historiography is beating around the bush rather than addressing revisionist research results. He exposes their myths, distortions and lies. 268 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography. (#25)

## SECTION TWO: Books on Specific Camps

**Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. It is alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were said to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, fast-acting or slow-acting poison gas, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multi-storied buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel at all. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka's true identity as a mere transit camp. 365 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#8)

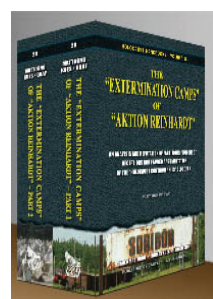
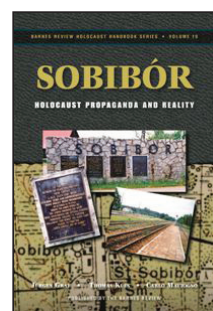
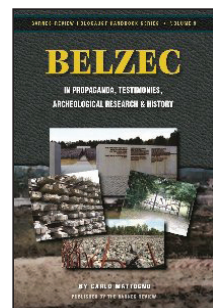
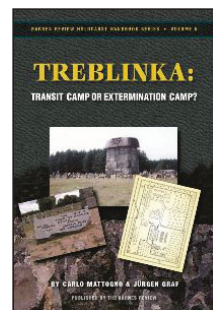
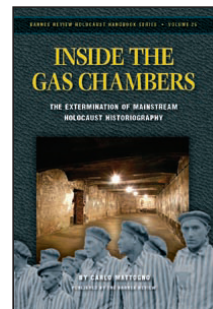
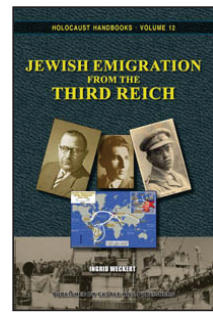
**Belzec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History.** By Carlo Mattogno. Witnesses report that between 600,000 and 3 million Jews were murdered in the Belzec camp, located in Poland. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas; unslaked lime in

trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers; etc. The corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving a trace. For those who know the stories about Treblinka this sounds familiar. Thus the author has restricted this study to the aspects which are new compared to Treblinka. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed at Belzec, the results of which are critically reviewed. 138 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#9)

**Sobibor: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality.** By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. Between 25,000 and 2 million Jews are said to have been killed in gas chambers in the Sobibór camp in Poland. The corpses were allegedly buried in mass graves and later incinerated on pyres. This book investigates these claims and shows that they are based on the selective use of contradictory eyewitness testimony. Archeological surveys of the camp in 2000-2001 are analyzed, with fatal results for the extermination camp hypothesis. The book also documents the general National Socialist policy toward Jews, which never included a genocidal "final solution." 434 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#19)

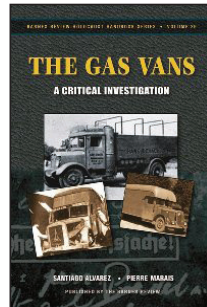
**The "Extermination Camps" of "Aktion Reinhardt".** By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. In late 2011, several members of the exterminationist *Holocaust Controversies* blog published a study which claims to refute three of our authors' monographs on the camps Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka (see previous three entries). This tome is their point-by-point response, which makes "mince-meat" out of the bloggers' attempt at refutation. It requires familiarity with the above-mentioned books and constitutes a comprehensive update and expansion of their themes. 2nd edition, two volumes, total of 1396 pages, illustrations, bibliography. (#28)

**Chelmno: A Camp in History & Propaganda.** By Carlo Mattogno. The world's premier holocaust scholar focuses his microscope on the death camp located in Poland. It was at Chelmno that huge masses of prisoners—as many as 1.3 million—were allegedly rounded up and killed. His book challenges the conventional wisdom of what went on inside Chelmno. Eyewitness statements, forensics reports, coroners' reports, excavations, crematoria, building plans, U.S. reports, German documents, evacuation efforts, mobile gas vans for homicidal purposes—all are discussed. 191 pages, indexed, illustrated, bibliography. (#23)





**The Gas Vans: A Critical Investigation.** (A perfect companion to the Chelmno book.) By Santiago Alvarez and Pierre Marais. It is alleged that the Nazis used mobile gas chambers to exterminate 700,000 people. Up until 2011, no thorough monograph had appeared on the topic. Santiago Alvarez has remedied the situation. Are witness statements reliable? Are documents genuine? Where are the murder weapons? Could they have operated as claimed? Where are the corpses? Alvarez has scrutinized all known wartime documents, photos and witness statements on this topic, and has examined the claims made by the mainstream. 390 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#26)



**Concentration Camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study.** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. Little research had been directed toward Concentration Camp Majdanek in central Poland, even though it is claimed that up to a million Jews were murdered there. The only information available is discredited Polish Communist propaganda. This glaring research gap has finally been filled. After exhaustive research of primary sources, Mattogno and Graf created a monumental study which expertly dissects and repudiates the myth of homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek. They also critically investigated the legend of mass executions of Jews in tank trenches (“Operation Harvest Festival”) and prove them groundless. The authors’ investigations lead to unambiguous conclusions about the camp which are radically different from the official theses. Again they have produced a standard and methodical investigative work, which authentic historiography cannot ignore. Third edition, 350 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#5)

**Concentration Camp Stutthof and Its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy.** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. The Stutthof camp in Prussia has never before been scientifically investigated by traditional historians, who claim nonetheless that Stutthof served as a ‘makeshift’ extermination camp in 1944. Based mainly on archival resources, this study thoroughly debunks this view and shows that Stutthof was in fact a center for the organization of German forced labor

toward the end of World War II. Third edition, 171 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#4)

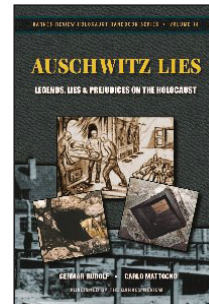
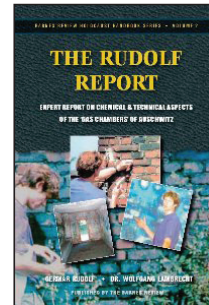
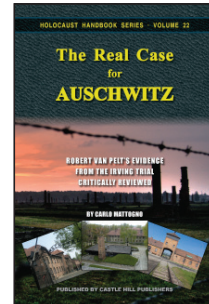
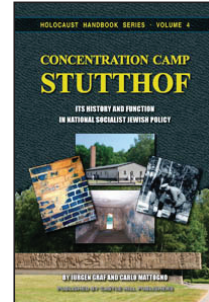
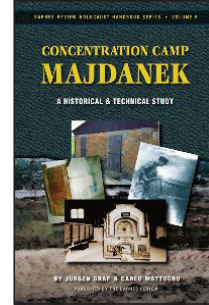
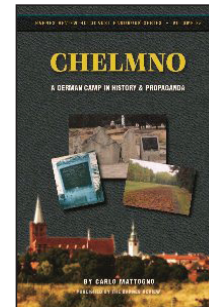
## SECTION THREE: Auschwitz Studies

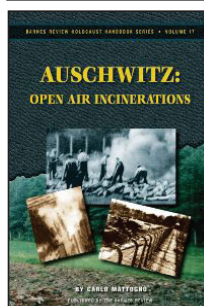
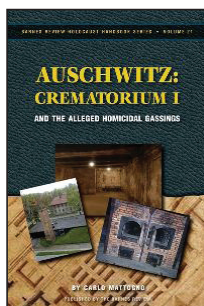
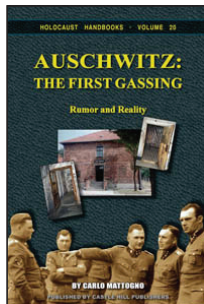
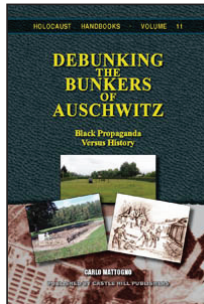
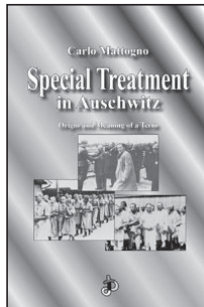
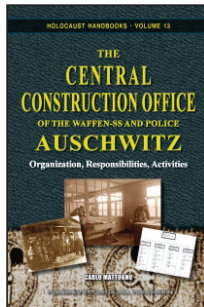
**The Real Case of Auschwitz: Robert van Pelt’s Evidence from the Irving Trial Critically Reviewed.** By Carlo Mattogno. Prof. Robert van Pelt is considered one of the best mainstream experts on Auschwitz and has been called upon several times in holocaust court cases. His work is cited by many to prove the holocaust happened as mainstream scholars insist. This book is a scholarly response to Prof. van Pelt—and Jean-Claude Pressac. It shows that their studies are heavily flawed. This is a book of prime political and scholarly importance to those looking for the truth about Auschwitz. 2nd edition, 758 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. (#22)

**Auschwitz: Plain Facts—A Response to Jean-Claude Pressac.** Edited by Germar Rudolf. French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac tried to refute revisionist findings with the “technical” method. For this he was praised by the mainstream, and they proclaimed victory over the “revisionists.” In *Auschwitz: Plain Facts*, Pressac’s works and claims are debunked. 2nd ed., 226 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary bibliography, index. (#14)

**The Rudolf Report. Expert Report on Chemical and Technical Aspects of the ‘Gas Chambers’ of Auschwitz.** By Germar Rudolf and Dr. Wolfgang Lambrecht. In 1988, execution expert Fred Leuchter investigated the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Majdanek and concluded that they could not have worked as claimed. Ever since, Leuchter’s work has been attacked. In 1993, Germar Rudolf published a thorough forensic study about the “gas chambers” of Auschwitz. His report irons out the deficiencies of “The Leuchter Report.” Second edition, 457 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#2)

**Auschwitz Lies: Legends, Lies and Prejudices on the Holocaust.** By Carlo Mattogno and Germar Rudolf. The fallacious research and alleged “refutation” of Revisionist scholars by French biochemist G. Wellers, Polish Prof. J. Markiewicz, chemist Dr. Richard Green, Profs. Zimmerman, M. Shermer and A. Grobman, as well as researchers Keren, McCarthy and Mazal, are exposed for what they are: blatant and easily exposed political





lies created to ostracize dissident historians. In this book, facts beat propaganda once again. Second edition, 398 pages, b&w illustrations, index. (#18)

**Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office.** By Carlo Mattogno. Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents, this study describes the history, organization, tasks and procedures of the Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Auschwitz Police. Despite a huge public interest in the camp, next to nothing was really known about this office, which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex, including the crematories which are said to have contained the “gas chambers.” 2nd ed., 188 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, index. (#13)

**Garrison and Headquarters Orders of the Auschwitz Camp.** By C. Mattogno. A large number of all the orders ever issued by the various commanders of the infamous Auschwitz camp have been preserved. They reveal the true nature of the camp with all its daily events. There is not a trace in these orders pointing at anything sinister going on in this camp. Quite to the contrary, many orders are in clear and insurmountable contradiction to claims that prisoners were mass murdered. This is a selection of the most pertinent of these orders together with comments putting them into their proper historical context. (Scheduled for early 2017; #34)

**Special Treatment in Auschwitz: Origin and Meaning of a Term.** By Carlo Mattogno. When appearing in German wartime documents, terms like “special treatment,” “special action,” and others have been interpreted as code words for mass murder. But that is not always true. This study focuses on documents about Auschwitz, showing that, while “special” had many different meanings, not a single one meant “execution.” Hence the practice of deciphering an alleged “code language” by assigning homicidal meaning to harmless documents – a key component of mainstream historiography – is untenable. 151 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#10)

**Healthcare at Auschwitz.** By Carlo Mattogno. In extension of the above study on *Special Treatment in Auschwitz*, this study proves the extent to which the German authorities at Auschwitz tried to provide appropriate health care for the inmates. This is frequently described as special measures to improve the inmates’ health and thus ability to work in Germany’s

armaments industry. This, after all, was the only thing the Auschwitz authorities were really interested in due to orders from the highest levels of the German government. (Scheduled for late 2016; #33)

**Debunking the Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda vs. History.** By Carlo Mattogno. The bunkers at Auschwitz are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically equipped for this purpose. With the help of original German wartime files as well as revealing air photos taken by Allied reconnaissance aircraft in 1944, this study shows that these homicidal “bunkers” never existed, how the rumors about them evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups in the camp, and how this propaganda was transformed into a false reality. 2nd ed., 292 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#11)

**Auschwitz: The First Gassing—Rumor and Reality.** By Carlo Mattogno. The first gassing in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study analyzes all available sources about this alleged event. It shows that these sources contradict each other in location, date, preparations, victims etc, rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow to this legend and prove without a shadow of a doubt that this legendary event never happened. 4th ed., 190 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#20)

**Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings.** By Carlo Mattogno. The morgue of Crematorium I in Auschwitz is said to be the first homicidal gas chamber there. This study investigates all statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents to accurately write a history of that building. Mattogno proves that its morgue was never a homicidal gas chamber, nor could it have worked as such. 138 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#21)

**Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations.** By Carlo Mattogno. Hundreds of thousands of corpses of murder victims are claimed to have been incinerated in deep ditches in the Auschwitz concentration camp. This book examines the many testimonies regarding these incinerations and establishes whether these claims were even possible. Us-

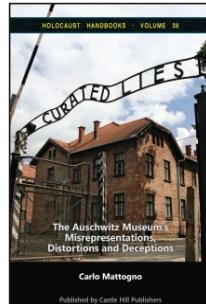
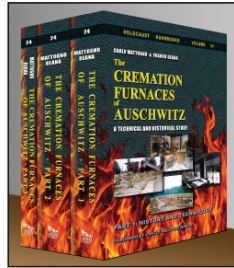


ing aerial photographs, physical evidence and wartime documents, the author shows that these claims are fiction. A must read. 132 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#17)

**The Cremation Furnaces of Auschwitz.** By Carlo Mattogno & Franco Deana. An exhaustive technical study of the history and technology of cremation in general and of the cremation furnaces of Auschwitz in particular.

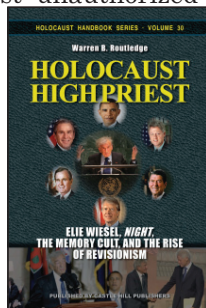
On a sound and thoroughly documented base of technical literature, extant wartime documents and material traces, Mattogno and Deana can establish the true nature and capacity of the Auschwitz cremation furnaces. They show that these devices were cheaper versions than what was usually produced, and that their capacity to cremate corpses was lower than normal, too. Hence this study reveals that the Auschwitz cremation furnaces were not monstrous super ovens but rather inferior make-shift devices. 3 vols., 1198 pages, b&w and color illustrations (vols 2 & 3), bibliography, index, glossary. (#24)

**Curated Lies: The Auschwitz Museum's Misrepresentations, Distortions and Deceptions** By Carlo Mattogno. Revisionist research results have put the Polish Auschwitz Museum under enormous pressure to answer this challenge. They've answered. This book analyzes their answer and reveals the appallingly mendacious attitude of the Auschwitz Museum authorities when presenting documents from their archives. With a contribution by Eric Hunt on the Auschwitz Museum's misrepresentations of its most valued asset, the "gas chamber" in the Main Camp. Ca. 240 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#38)



## SECTION FOUR Witness Critique

**Holocaust High Priest: Elie Wiesel, Night, the Memory Cult, and the Rise of Revisionism.** By Warren B. Routledge. The first unauthorized biography of Wiesel exposes both his personal deceits and the whole myth of "the six million." It shows how Zionist control has allowed Wiesel and his fellow extremists to force leaders of many nations, the U.N. and even popes to genuflect before Wiesel as symbolic acts of subordination to World Jewry, while at



the same time forcing school children to submit to Holocaust brainwashing. 468 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#30)

**Auschwitz: Confessions and Testimonies.** By Jürgen Graf. The traditional narrative of what transpired at the infamous Auschwitz camp during WWII rests almost exclusively on witness testimony from former inmates as well as erstwhile camp officials. This study critically scrutinizes the 40 most important of these witness statements by checking them for internal coherence, and by comparing them with one another as well as with other evidence such as wartime documents, air photos, forensic research results, and material traces. The result is devastating for the traditional narrative. (Scheduled for late 2016; #36)

**Commandant of Auschwitz: Rudolf Höss, His Torture and His Forced Confessions.** By Rudolf Höss & Carlo Mattogno. When Rudolf Höss was in charge at Auschwitz, the mass extermination of Jews in gas chambers is said to have been launched and carried out. He confessed this in numerous postwar depositions. Hence Höss's testimony is the most convincing of all. But what traditional sources usually do not reveal is that Höss was severely tortured to coerce him to "confess," and that his various statements are not only contradictory but also full of historically and physically impossible, even absurd claims. This study expertly analyzes Höss's various confessions and lays them all open for everyone to see the ugly truth. (Scheduled for summer 2016; #35)

**An Auschwitz Doctor's Eyewitness Account: The Tall Tales of Dr. Mengele's Assistant Analyzed.** By Miklos Nyiszli & Carlo Mattogno. Nyiszli, a Hungarian Jew who studied medicine in Germany before the war, ended up at Auschwitz in 1944 as Dr. Mengele's assistant. After the war he wrote an account of what he claimed to have experienced. To this day some traditional historians take his accounts seriously, while others accept that it is a grotesque collection of lies and exaggerations. This study analyzes Nyiszli's novel and skillfully separates truth from fabulous fabrication. (Scheduled for spring 2016; #37)

### Further Projects

Further studies we propose to publish would scrutinize eyewitness accounts from, e.g., Phillip Müller, Rudolf Vrba, Henryk Tauber, Yankiel Wiernik, Richard Glazar. Scholars interested in taking on any of these or other witnesses, please get in touch using the contact form at [www.codoh.com/contact-us](http://www.codoh.com/contact-us)

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## BOOKS BY AND FROM CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS

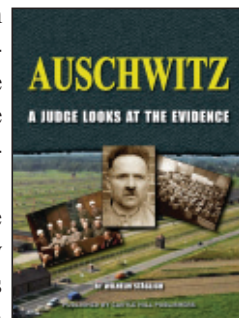
Below please find some of the books published or distributed by Castle Hill Publishers in the United Kingdom. For our current and complete range of products visit our web store at [shop.codoh.com](http://shop.codoh.com).

### Wilhelm Stäglich, *Auschwitz: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*

Auschwitz is the epicenter of the Holocaust, where more people are said to have been murdered than anywhere else. At this detention camp the industrialized Nazi mass murder is said to have reached its demonic pinnacle. This narrative is based on a wide range of evidence, the most important of which was presented during two trials: the International Military Tribunal of 1945/46, and the German Auschwitz Trial of 1963-1965 in Frankfurt.

The late Wilhelm Stäglich, until the mid-1970s a German judge, has so far been the only *legal* expert to critically analyze this evidence. His research reveals the incredibly scandalous way in which the Allied victors and later the German judicial authorities bent and broke the law in order to come to politically foregone conclusions. Stäglich also exposes the shockingly superficial way in which historians are dealing with the many incongruities and discrepancies of the historical record. Second, corrected and slightly revised edition with a new preface and epilogue.

422 pp., 6"×9", pb, ill.

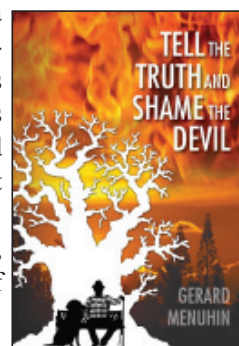


### Gerard Menuhin: *Tell the Truth & Shame the Devil*

A prominent Jew from a famous family says the "Holocaust" is a wartime propaganda myth which has turned into an extortion racket. Far from bearing the sole guilt for starting WWII as alleged at Nuremberg (for which many of the surviving German leaders were hanged) Germany is mostly innocent in this respect and made numerous attempts to avoid and later to end the confrontation. During the 1930s Germany was confronted by a powerful Jewish-dominated world plutocracy out to destroy it... Yes, a prominent Jew says all this. Accept it or reject it, but be sure to read it and judge for yourself!

The author is the son of the great American-born violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who, though from a long line of rabbinical ancestors, fiercely criticized the foreign policy of the state of Israel and its repression of the Palestinians in the Holy Land.

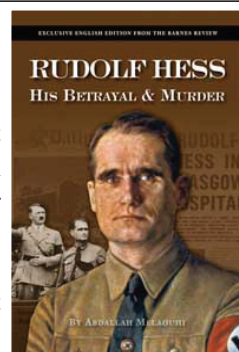
464 pp. pb, 6"×9"



### Abdallah Melaouhi, *Rudolf Hess. His Betrayal and Murder*

In May 1941, Rudolf Hess, Hitler's right-hand man, flew to England to make peace. His plane crashed, and he was made a prisoner of the Allies and kept in solitary confinement nearly the rest of his life. What truths about the war did Hess possess that were of such danger? The author worked as a male nurse caring for Rudolf Hess from 1982 until his death in 1987 at the Allied Prison in Berlin. Minutes after the murder he was called to the prison. Ask by the author what had happened, an unknown U.S. soldier replied: "The pig is finished; you won't have to work a night shift any longer." What he experienced there, minutely described in this book, proves beyond doubt that Mr. Hess was strangled to death by his Anglo-Saxon captors.

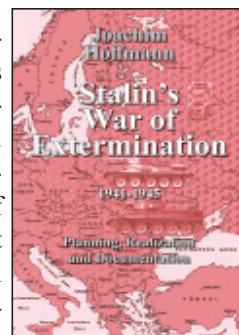
300 pp. pb, 6"×9", ill.



### Joachim Hoffmann, *Stalin's War of Extermination 1941-1945*

Breakthrough bestseller by a German government historian documenting Stalin's murderous war against the German army and the German people. Based on the author's lifelong study of German and Russian military records, this book reveals the Red Army's grisly record of atrocities against soldiers and civilians, as ordered by Stalin. Since the 1920s, Stalin planned to invade Western Europe to initiate the "World Revolution." He prepared an attack which was unparalleled in history not only in terms of the amount of troops amassed. The Germans noticed Stalin's aggressive intentions, but they underestimated the strength of the Red Army. What unfolded was the most-cruel war in history. This book shows how Stalin and his Bolshevik henchman used unimaginable violence and atrocities to break any resistance in the Red Army and to force their unwilling soldiers to fight against the Germans. The book explains how Soviet propagandists incited their soldiers to unlimited hatred against everything German, and he gives the reader a short but extremely unpleasant glimpse into what happened when these Soviet soldiers finally reached German soil in 1945: A gigantic wave of looting, arson, rape, torture, and mass murder...

428 pp. pb, 6"×9", ill, bibl., index

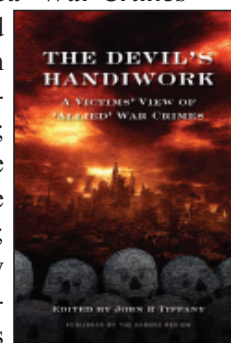




Herbert L. Brown, *The Devil's Handiwork. A Victim's View of "Allied" War Crimes*

An amazing compilation of war crimes committed by the "good guys" against the "bad guys." Many of the events covered in this book are to this day censored or twisted in mainstream history books. Chapters cover: Death camps in the Civil War; concentration camps in the Boer War; The Dresden Massacre – the worst war crime in history; the Ukrainian terror famine; the gruesome harvest in Eastern Europe; the myth of the 6 million; Operation Keelhaul; the Nuremberg Trials; the Katyn Forest Massacre; the Stuttgart Atrocity; bastardizing the Germans after WWII; the use of the atom bomb; Cuba betrayed; the Invasion of Lebanon; the policy of de-Nazification; the Malmedy Trial; the Dachau Trial; the Vinnytsia genocide; crimes during the occupation of Germany; FDR's Great Sedition Trial; the Morgenthau Plan; the propaganda of the Writers War Board; myths of civilian bombings; the Lend-Lease fiasco; truth about Auschwitz; Pearl Harbor; the Soviet genocide across Europe; much more.

275 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



Ralph Grandinetti, *Final Solution. Germany's Madagascar Resettlement Plan*

Everyone "knows" the Germans had a "final solution" for their so-called "Jewish Problem." But Adolf Hitler's final solution did not involve homicidal gas chambers and blazing crematory ovens. Instead, Hitler's final solution offered Jewish leaders the island of Madagascar, back then a French colony. In a meeting with Vichy French Prime Minister Pierre Laval, Laval agreed to turn Madagascar into a new Jewish homeland where, ultimately, all of Europe's 4,000,000 Jews might be settled. This new Madagascar was to be governed by a joint German-French board with representation granted to any government cooperating. What a paradise Madagascar could have become, but instead Zionists insisted on occupying the "Holy Land," where they knew strife and conflict awaited them. What was the Madagascar Plan, and why did it fail? Which world leaders supported it – and which did not? Why was the plan eventually abandoned?

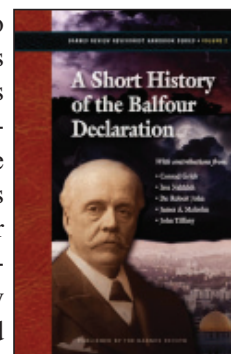
108 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



John Tiffany, *A Short History of the Balfour Declaration*

Few have heard of the Balfour Declaration, the history of which is known primarily to students of global affairs. What general knowledge there is surrounding its origins is usually limited to dry accounts in diplomatic histories. But here is a case where truth is stranger than fiction. The issuance of the Balfour Declaration set the stage for American entry into World War I and thereby laid the groundwork for World War II and the many consequential global convulsions that followed. And, ultimately, of course, it's the foundation of the tension in the Middle East today that points toward further war and destruction. Here is the secret history of the Balfour Declaration, laid out in no uncertain terms and devoid of euphemism and political correctness. Those who have any serious desire to understand the sources of world conflict need this precise and candid analysis – the facts – about the behind-the-scenes machinations that brought the Balfour Declaration into being – and why.

118 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



Germar Rudolf: *Resistance is Obligatory!*

In 2005 Rudolf, a peaceful dissident and publisher of revisionist literature, was kidnapped by the U.S. government and deported to Germany. There the local lackey regime staged a show trial against him for his historical writings. Rudolf was not permitted to defend his historical opinions, as the German penal law prohibits this. Yet he defended himself anyway: 7 days long Rudolf held a speech in the court room, during which he proved systematically that only the revisionists are scholarly in their attitude, whereas the Holocaust orthodoxy is merely pseudo-scientific. He then explained in detail why it is everyone's obligation to resist, without violence, a government which throws peaceful dissident into dungeons. When Rudolf tried to publish his public defence speech as a book from his prison cell, the public prosecutor initiated a new criminal investigation against him. After his probation time ended in 2011, he dared publish this speech anyway...

2nd ed. 2016, 378 pp., 6"×9", pb, b/w ill.

